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Chronicles of Oldfields

Thomas Newton Allen

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Chronicles of Oldfields

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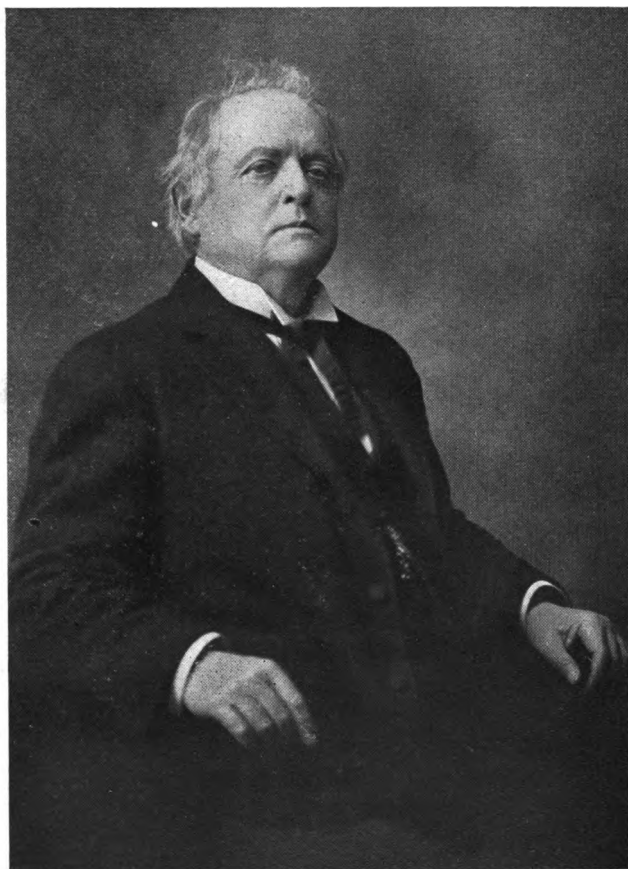
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Chronicles of Oldfields

By

THOMAS N. ALLEN

1909

THE ALICE HARRIMAN COMPANY

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INTRODUCTION

It gives me real pleasure to know that **CHRONICLES OF OLDFIELDS**, which, reading in manuscript, I found a rare treat, is to be as the Dominie would say, "preserved in amber,"—that is, put into book form. Too often the books we buy are disappointing; but in this the reader will find, so it seems to me, an unusual tale, unusually well told.

I have known the author of these **CHRONICLES** for many years. He was residing at Olympia when I had the honor of being Governor of this splendid State of Washington, and although of a political faith different from my own, he gave my administration a steady, cordial support throughout the four trying years, 1893-7. From a casual acquaintance we drifted insensibly into the closer ties of abiding friendship.

Many an evening we have spent in perfect *camaraderie*, enlivened by his quaint Southern reminiscences. Many a quiet game have we had, with his family around him,—he the life and center of the group. The characteristic flavor of these **CHRONICLES** is natural; the endearing qualities of the characters portrayed and the good that he had seen and chronicled in others are but the reflection of his own image on the mirror of his memory.

I only hope when we are estimated by the rising generation of the Western Slope, that the best in us may be brought into as high relief and our foibles, frailties and defects may be etched in as delicately and with as friendly and understanding a pen-point as my dear old friend Allen has limned for our enjoyment the friends of his youth.

JOHN H. MCGRAW.

PREFACE

In all countries and in all times there are old gray-headed fellows who once stoutly marched in the ranks with their comrades, but have long since fallen by the way, and to whom nothing is left but a memory of former days. In His mercy the Giver of all good things has bestowed this memory, and, as old age increases, it remains and ever grows stronger, solacing and sweetening the last years of life, so that, though his physical force and vigor has gone from him, and even mentally the happenings of yesterday are easily forgotten, the old homestead where his boyhood days were spent, the men and women he then knew their individual peculiarities and idiosyncracies and their acts and sayings, stay by the ageing man, and he loves to think of them and to recall them.

I do not know why this is so. Perhaps it may be that in his youth his mind was fresher and stronger, his memory storing away occurrences more diligently, so to speak, than in old age; but this does not explain the curious fact that happenings of his early days or the recollections of them, which he had forgotten, or, as we say, had passed from his mind, are revived when he grows old. I do not know that I ever heard

or read anything that made this clear. I doubt whether it can be done. I think it is one of the many mysteries in which we live, move and have our being; but however it is, it is by reason of this singularity and because of it that I have written the series of stories which follow, and which I call **CHRONICLES OF OLDFIELDS**. They are the recollections of an old man and I, in my seventieth year, dedicate this book to the Old Men of the Country, fondly hoping that it may bring a smile of pleasure to the old faces to whom smiles of pleasure are like angels' visits.

CHRONICLES OF OLDFIELDS

DOMINIE COLLINS WRITES

In every country and in every age men have given specific names to the places in which they gather together and build houses. Where they get these names is a mystery to me. Perhaps if I were capable of finding out I would come to know that in different ways they derive or originate them, some of which may still be traced and some are obscured by great lapse of time. Tyre and Sidon, and Bagdad and the "Cities of the Plain"—who the mischief knows where they got their names?

Well, to this universal custom of naming the towns of the world Oldfields is no exception—Oldfields, the town in which about four o' the clock one morning many years ago the writer of these 'Chronicles' was born, "with a white head and something of a round belly," like Falstaff. Even in that far-away time it was and had been from immemorial days just simply "Oldfields," and it has continued to be and is today Oldfields, and so it will always be to the end of time, if I'm not greatly mistaken. Of course, it is possible that an earthquake may shake it down some

day,—but Oldfields would come up again and resume its life. As to conflagrations, I snap my finger at them. No fire will ever wipe out Oldfields. From Walnut Hill on the west, where old Doctor Humes' place is, to Judge Summers' on the east, the main street of Oldfields strings out for more than a mile, and I think it must be at least three-quarters of another mile from the top of the turnpike on the north, where we first catch sight of the evening stage from Lawton, to Squire Buckley's house on the south side. Would you tell me that any fire could spread over all that ground? You must be a fool!

Don't talk to me about the great fire in London; I've heard of that, and I venture to say that when all the facts come out you'll find that a measly lot of wooden houses were jammed up together, and it wasn't in nature but what sooner or later they'd catch fire and burn up.

No, sir; when Oldfields burns it will only be at the last day the Bible speaks of, and which was so eloquently referred to the other Sunday by Reverend Spooner. The whole world, said he, will be wrapped in flames and will be consumed like a piece of parchment. Of course, Oldfields will go then; I am willing to admit it, but, mark what I tell you, even then it will be one of the last,—one of the very last!

The bulk of these Chronicles will be about men and women in Oldfields, but I cannot deny myself the pleasure of saying a few words about the streets and houses. As to the streets, there are the two principal ones, Main Street, which I have mentioned before, and Cross Street, which, as its name so cunningly indicates, crosses, or as we say in Geometry, bisects Main

at right angles. Back of Main Street there is Water Street, so named because Cow Creek runs along one side of it, and at the far end of Water Street there is a little street called Side Street. But Main Street is the great business street of Oldfields. The Court House is on this street, and opposite the Court House stand in solid ranks, for one entire block, dry goods stores, boot and shoe stores (dry goods include hats and caps), Kelly's Tavern, and two groceries, in both of which liquor is sold in the back room. Flanking the Court House on one side is the County Clerk's office, and on the other the Circuit Clerk's office. Across the way, perpendicular, as it were, to the business block, is Short Street, where the lawyers' offices are, and the jail. Finnegan's Tavern and stage stand is at the corner of Main and Cross Streets, and Oldfields Academy, in which the writer of these Chronicles has instructed the youth of both sexes year in and year out for half a century, occupies a commanding position on Walnut Hill opposite the dwelling of Doctor Humes. All these houses are built of brick or stone.

The people of Oldfields are to the manor born, as the poet hath it; there are no strangers nor foreigners. White and black, here they first saw the light of day, as their fathers did before them, and here, in all probability, in the fulness of time, they will die.

Elsewhere in these United States they tell me that people come and go, are here today and there tomorrow, and that you are liable to run up against a foreigner any time. What a spirit of restlessness and discontent such a condition of things manifests! And how disagreeable! Wandering about from one place

to another, like the Tartars, and never knowing that blessed feeling of home! The Tartars, however, as geography tells us, raised stock for a living, and when the grass was eaten short in one place necessity compelled them to move on to another. So they had some excuse.

Oldfields folks, thank God, are no such people. They love their homes, they love their old Court House and the shops and stores, and the very stones in the street are familiar to them. And what is just as good, if not better, they love one another. Of course, as to this, I speak generally, for, as you will see further along in these Chronicles, the old Adam is in some of them to quite a degree, but as a rule we are a neighborly, kindly people, and there is no question but what we think ourselves finer clay than outsiders. This is natural. An Oldfielder knows every man, woman and child in town, even to the negroes, and he knows their forebears, also; and his memory, without effort, is stored with the record of marriages, births, and deaths. Yes, we are a neighborly, kindly, familiar people, knowing each other all our lives, mutually interested in one another's affairs, and naturally, as I say, holding ourselves superior to those who, unfortunately, do not live in Oldfields.

But, mark you, Oldfields people preserve their sanity, intact. I hear it said that on the outside there are some creatures who call themselves *Socialists* and who pretend to believe that one man's just as good as another. Is it possible that any decent human being can listen to such stuff as that and keep his good manners? It passes my understanding!

As I say, Oldfields people are not crazy. They—

and when I say "*they*" I refer, of course, to the white people, for on a question of this sort negroes are not considered—they, the white folks of Oldfields, know just as well that some people are better than others, as they know that some are taller and bigger every way—better in blood, better in estate, and better in point of brains—though this last kind of superiority is not so well defined and acquiesced in as are birth and fortune. And a man may be interesting, and be listened to if he is smart, but it will not follow, at all, that he'll be looked up to in the same way nor to the same degree.

Now, if an intelligent, decent-looking stranger should come to Oldfields—and there have been instances within my recollection—I would first show him the town, the Court House, the two taverns, the stores and the principal residences, and then I would introduce him to our most prominent citizens. And so, having said a word—a very inadequate word—about those inanimate things, I will now endeavor to the best of my ability to describe the men and women of Oldfields who are best known, or at least, most remarkable from one cause or another.

JUDGE KENYON SUMMERS

Judge Summers is a lean, lank, very bony man. It may never be known, but the impression in Oldfields is that he has more bones than the rest of us. He is

dignified to the point of stiffness, and the prevalent gossip is that once when his man Ike, who waits on him, was sick and the Judge attempted to bend over and tie his own shoes, his bones cracked so alarmingly that he desisted. It is certain that his joints make a creaking sound, quite audible, when he sits down or gets up, and 'tis said that his knuckles ache and hurt him so that very often during the day he has to manipulate one hand with the other to appease them, as it were, and this produces a sort of clack, clacking sound, quite like those little wooden cups make that the girl who danced the Spanish Fandango at the show had in her hands. Little Miss Tripper, the dressmaker, told me that her mother told her that old Miss Keats, Mrs. Summers' sister, told *her* that she peeped through a crack in the door when Judge Summers courted his wife, and that he did it standing up.

As seems to be quite natural, the Judge is very unbending, as I may say, and very positive and uncompromising in his mental make-up. In forty years' service on the bench he has never been known to grant a new trial on a question of law; and in the celebrated case, known to Oldfields as the Jenkins case, in which the accused was convicted of murder and after the trial it turned out that the real murderer was another man, I am told that Judge Summers was most reluctant to open the case and permit the fact to be shown. His unwillingness was constitutional. Alike with the jury, he had made up his mind that the prisoner at the bar was guilty, and it was somewhat in the nature of a geological cataclysm to have to change his opinion. On another occasion Sim Drake made the Judge a pair of trousers and, Sim being

somewhat in liquor that day, he put the fore part, flap and all, behind! 'Twas all Mrs. Summers could do to keep the Judge from wearing the trousers down town. The thing had been *done*; it was an *accomplished fact*, he said, and he was sorely averse to making the change. I recollect quite well the fate of a young Presbyterian minister, fresh from the theological department of Central College, who came to Oldfields to preach his trial sermon. The poor fellow had some new-fangled notions about the length of the days in which God made the heavens and the earth and all that therein is, but Judge Summers, who is the chief pillar in that church, interrupted the sermon and refused to let the young divine proceed. In this matter, however, all Oldfields, to a man, said the Judge was right.

God is Almighty, and He could have made the world in a jiffy if He had been so minded, said Oldfields. The sacred word says He made it in six days, and it was rank heresy, if not something worse, to talk about six years or six thousand years. The next day when Sim Drake, being, as it happened, again in liquor, said something about it, and about God *resting* on the seventh day, which seemed to squint at skepticism, Obe Crews, over his bar at Finnegan's Tavern, admonished him severely. "Such d—d stuff as you are talking," said Obe, "is calculated to undermine the very foundations of our holy religion, and I do not want to hear it in my tavern." Some one in the party (I think it was Squire Buckley) made signs to Obe by crooking his elbow and putting his hand to his mouth to hint that Sim had been drinking too much, but Obe was not appeased in the least—on the

contrary, quite the reverse, for he said as he filled his glass and invited us all to drink, "Good liquor, gentlemen is an honest work, and no man shall be permitted to say at my bar that Obe Crews' whiskey caused him to malign the Lord." I doubt if anywhere else on the face of the earth orthodoxy could have been so promptly vindicated.

ERASMUS HUMES, M. D.

Doc Humes (my remarks now appertain to his physical self) is a large, ponderous man. I have a fond conceit that he is a sort of blended likeness of old Samuel Johnson, Mirabeau, and Dominie Sampson. He stands six feet two in his stocking feet and is broad in proportion. Sim Drake has a quarrel with him every time he has to make him a suit of clothes, for he says it necessitates twice as much cloth as the average man, to say nothing of thread and buttons; and Tom Leathers, the cobbler, swears that much the larger part of a side of leather is consumed in making his boots. I can well believe it, for I never saw such a foot on mortal man. As to his head, I have heard the expression, "a leonine head," but Doc Humes' head might as well be called elephantine. His eyes are rather small, considering, but his nose would make a decent proboscis; and Obe Crews says that while he believes in the omnipotence of God, yet God

Himself could not make Doc Humes' mouth larger unless He set his ears back considerably. And this is apparent to all observers.

Doc attended one course of lectures under old Ben Dudley at Transylvania, but the most of what he knows about medicine and diseases he picked up himself, practicing on his fellow man. One of his most striking attributes, as I may say, is his voice. It is profound, sepulchral, and when he speaks the circumjacent atmosphere vibrates audibly as when a deep-toned church bell tolls for the dead. He is our leading physician, and night or day, storm or sunshine, he goes whenever and wherever he is wanted. It matters not who is sick,—rich or poor, white or black, near or far; in his stoutly-built gig, drawn by his old nick-tailed mare, and with his medicine chest under the seat, he spends his life driving about the country and ministering to human ills. I doubt if there is a man, woman or child in a radius of ten miles but what, one time or another, has poked out tongue at his command, and has swallowed his pills.

He owes his popularity to the confidence people have in his good, hard sense, and to the wonderful, untiring kindness and goodness of his heart. He is a sort of natural doctor, and long experience makes his judgment in respect of disease well-nigh infallible.

He has a frank and open way in talking about his profession that is quite unusual, I think. So many physicians look wise and say nothing. Doc says that all the learning and the experience a physician can have only fits him to guess well, and that just as often his guess will be wrong as right. He says the great

thing is to guess right at the start. To illustrate the narrow compass of what may really be known, he tells about a famous Dutch doctor, Herman Boerhaave. He says this man was so celebrated that the Emperor of China wrote him a letter addressed to "Boerhaave, Physician, Europe," and that Boerhaave received the letter; and that shortly before his death he told his friends he had written a book that contained all he knew about medicine, but it was not to be made public until after his decease. And so when the book was opened it contained these words: "Keep your head cool, your feet warm, and your bowels open!" That was all! Doc says, "put no faith in the man or the nostrum that professes to work a certain cure. Some diseases are incurable, and there are no specifics for any disease. Calomel will cure some cases of cholera, and red precipitate will cure some cases of itch, but thousands of people die of cholera, and the itch will sometimes hang on to a man for seven years."

Doc Humes is a successful physician and one would be induced to say, taking his own estimate of the profession, that he is certainly very *fortunate* in treating diseases, but I prefer to look at the matter in another way, and to consider that his is another instance of what is so often seen in this world, viz: that the really great men who *do* things are the most modest men in talking about it. And to me he further illustrates what I firmly believe to be the fact, that both in medicine and in law, to say nothing now of other vocations, there are to be found in little towns here in the South some most remarkable men, —most remarkable.

What sayeth the poet:

“Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom’d caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flow’r is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

My quotation from Gray is not entirely happy for the occasion, for “dark caves” are as much unlike the towns I refer to as possible, and as to blushing unseen and wasting sweetness on the desert air, the men I have in mind have nothing to blush for, and certainly their great abilities are fully appreciated by the rest of us. However, I’ll let the stanza stand.

ISRAEL BUCKLEY

Among the men of mark in Oldfields, Israel Buckley stands out prominently. Take him by and large, or, as we say, up one side and down the other, he is one of the few men I have ever known whom I consider a *wise* man. And mark you, every civilized people and every age produce what we call *great* men, but let any one ponder over the matter and see how many wise men there have been, that history takes any note of. How many such men have you met up with in the course of your life?

A wise man, I take it, is a man whose mind is stored with most of the useful knowledge the thought

and experience of the ages have accumulated, and the *storing* is orderly and systematic, so that it can always be got at when needed. And to this is added many a gem of thought all his own.

Solomon was a wise man, you say, and so he was, but Solomon was peculiarly favored by God—he had extraordinary advantages, so to speak. God set out to make him exceptional in wisdom, and yet it always seemed to me that Solomon was very weak in some respects—prodigiously so. For instance, see the number of wives and concubines he had! What in the name of sense and common decency did he want with them? And how could he expect to have any peace of mind with all those women in the house?

I, Dominie Collins, writer of these Chronicles, was once a married man. I had a wife—only one—and I

But to resume. I am writing of the Squire, who is my friend, and whose kindly nature and equable mind have contributed to some of the happiest moments of my life. Unlike me and most other weak creatures, the Squire never married, and in nothing else could he have displayed more wisdom! “A man that’s married is a man that’s marred.” Whoever said that said a true thing. Squire Buckley is a man of small stature but of perfect symmetry of figure and he is as graceful in his motions as a leopard. His feet and hands are well shaped, and his refined and delicate features have yet a manly and noble expression that commands instant attention and admiration. He is easily the handsomest man I ever saw. Alexander Hamilton’s portrait, which hangs in the Squire’s library, is the representation of a very hand-

some and a very great man, and sometimes I look at it and then turn and look at my friend, and my thought is that any comparison cannot be to the disadvantage of the latter.

When a young man he studied law, with the intent to make the practice of it the business of his life, and he mastered the great underlying principles of the science with a thoroughness that would have gained for himself the admiration of a Mansfield or a Marshall. He thought then, and he thinks now, that it is the noblest of all sciences, because, as he says, its subject matter is Justice, and he says that the man who imbues his mind and heart with a true sense of justice is the very highest order of man the civilization of all the ages will ever evolve. He says that the just man made perfect is the Son of God.

But the science of the law, and the practice of it, did not commend themselves equally to his taste and inclination. For many reasons the latter came to be objectionable to him, and he soon abandoned it and accepted his appointment to the clerkship of the Circuit Court, a position he holds to this day.

And what a clerk! Intelligent, painstaking, careful, correct, a handwriting that is as plain as print and far more beautiful, a clearness and neatness of his pages, an urbanity and sweetness of manner and an uprightness and integrity that are above all suspicion, the Squire is a model for every servant of the people. He is invaluable to bench and bar, and nothing short of death or helpless senility would excuse him from further service. To have all men in their respective duties and calling as able, as efficient and as honorable, would be to hasten the Millenium!

We admire a fine intellect, but we love a good heart, and I find more pleasure in recalling a kindly deed than in contemplating a great genius. Several years ago, Anthony Sherlock brought suit against Sim Drake on a note on which Sim, unfortunately, was bound as a surety. His principal had left the State and Sim had no idea where he had gone. There was no defense to the suit and Sherlock was bent on getting judgment and subjecting Sim's property to execution. This meant ruin to poor Sim, and the only thing he could do about it was to get drunk, which he proceeded to do in downright fashion.

The Squire took up the note and had the suit dismissed. On the same day he walked into Sim's shop and told him that the matter had been settled, and, taking the note from his pocket, gave it to Sim. Imagine the poor fellow's joy and surprise! In answer to his inquiry, the Squire told him a cock-and-bull story to the effect that the absconding debtor had prospered out West and had sent him the money to pay off the note, which was all the veriest moonshine in the world! The Squire had paid the debt out of his own pocket; but to this day Sim thinks the man he befriended remitted the money, and he talks about his judgment of men and how he is never mistaken in "sizing 'em up," as he expresses it.

Is it right, under any state of case, to tell a lie? Well, I hold that while the truth should generally be preferred, it is permissible, under some circumstances, to deviate, so to speak, and that the motive must be taken into consideration. In the Squire's case, I say that it was a beautiful example of justifiable mendacity, and that if the recording angel dropped a tear

upon Toby Shandy's oath "and blotted it out forever," he let the ink dry on his pen while listening to the conversation between Sim Drake and the Squire, and before he could dip it in his ink-horn again God confused the incident in his mind, and it was not recorded at all.

MISS KEATS

The reader of these Chronicles will have observed that my allusions to the fair sex, as the phrase is, have, so far, been few and far between, and not in the least eulogistic. Indeed, I have not been able to conceal the fact that I have no high opinion of women, taking them by and large. My mother died when I was very young and I have no recollection of her. I never had a sister. Whether, if this had been otherwise, I would be disposed to be less indiscriminate, is more than I can say. Certainly, there was a time in my life when I felt differently, but that was long ago.

Miss Keats (Arabella is her Christian name) is the twin sister of Judge Summers' wife and has her home with the Summers. I will not be so rude as to describe her personal appearance.

In character and disposition Miss Keats is very peculiar. She is a nervous, skittish sort of woman, and the greatest prude that ever was.

The simplest and most natural conduct of another will often incur her censure, and an innocent word be

twisted into a meretricious meaning. Of course, people will be revenged on such a person and say things of her that tend to make her quite ridiculous. For instance, when Mrs. Summers had her first baby, Miss Keats was so shocked that she took to her bed; and one morning in spring, the season of the year when the little birds are pairing and nesting, Miss Keats was found on the floor of her chamber unconscious. She and little Miss Tripper, the dressmaker, though so different in social rank, are great friends and gossips, and woe to the good name of any woman, matron or maid, who comes into their minds when they are together.

To see Miss Keats at church one might think pepper would be cold in her mouth,—so demure, so devout, she looks. Only last Sunday when they were chanting

“Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty,”

I happened to glance at Miss Keats, and her greenish, gray eyes were cast ceiling-ward as though she momentarily expected the Almighty, or the angel Gabriel, at least, to come down through the roof. Such pious ecstasy is not natural, leastwise not in a crowd.

There are times in my musing humor when I consider how strange it is that so many people, or a single person, for that matter, should prefer doing wrong to doing right,—should roll sin under the tongue as a sweet morsel,—but in the whole catalogue of base things men are guilty of, not one is so inexplicable to me as hypocrisy—nor so detestable.

I can in some measure comprehend how a desperately wicked person can defy God and commit arson,

rape or murder, but how any sane mortal being can dare to face Him and profess to love and adore Him, conscious of the fact that the old devil is really the one whom he serves, is something I can't understand.

OBADIAH CREWS

The Boniface of Finnegan's Tavern

Finnegan's Tavern, as all the world knows, is situate at the corner of Main Street and Cross Street, and it has been a public house for the entertainment of man and beast for a time beyond which the memory of man runneth not to the contrary.

When Dennis Finnegan went to his reward, having reached, with the preserving qualities of good liquor, such a ripe old age that we all considered him as one whom God had overlooked, his relict exchanged properties with Obadiah Crews, the latter becoming the owner and keeper of the tavern, and the widow taking Obe's little farm on Strode's Creek, where, as she observed, she could pass the rest of her days in peace and quiet, raising geese and guinea hens.

If poets were born, not made, so was Obe Crews born to keep tavern, his natural fitness for that time-honored and pleasant avocation being shown by a remark he made the very first day he stood behind his bar and welcomed his friends, namely, that clean sheets and a groaning table are two of the three

things Finnegan's Tavern would always have, and that the third was a barrel of whiskey from which not a dram had been drawn until the liquor was ten years old.

I must give you a pen-portrait, as it were, of Obe Crews, for it is one of my settled convictions that we can never know a man until we see him. We may hear of him and form some notion of the manner of man he is, but if we are to know him we must see him, and next to actual sight of him in the flesh is a description which sets him before us clothed, as it were, in his physical and mental attributes. Whether the works of God be horses in the pasture, or human beings moving about here and there, we must get close to them to judge them. Obe is what we call a pony-made man, that is, he is below the average in height, his head is round as a bullet, his eyes are small and gray, with a twinkle of fun in them, and his mouth turns up slightly at the corners, which gives his face a pleasant expression. His cheeks are as red as a red apple, his shoulders are square and broad, and his belly rounds out like the sides of a bushel basket. He waddles in his walk and has no dignity, but is much thought of. In disposition, character and mental attributes he is one of those all-round men, who, as the saying is, wears well. He is the same kindly, cheerful, reliable man today that he was yesterday and will be tomorrow. You always know where to find him. No matter of local importance comes up but what he is consulted, and the beautiful simplicity and, as I may say, the pleasant sanity and directness of his judgment make him a man of mark in Oldfields.

I can illustrate this by an incident which I love

to recall: Tobias Elkins was born and raised in Oldfields, where he followed his trade of blacksmith, and was an excellent workman. We all liked Tobias, notwithstanding his one great failing, which was an intemperate adhesion, as it were, to the bottle. From Monday morning to Saturday noon the honest ring of his anvil was heard from one end of Oldfields to the other; and no man could turn out a better piece of work, whether it was a plow, an axe or shoeing a horse; but Saturday evenings, rain or shine, Tobe would go a-fishing. Isaak Walton himself was not a greater lover of the gentle sport. Tobe neither talked about it nor wrote a book; but there is not a pool nor a ripple in Stoner Creek, from Thacher's Mill to the Bourbon line, that he did not know as well as he knew the palm of his hand, and no matter what poor luck others would have the fish would always bite for Tobe.

On one of those evenings he was observed wending his way to his favorite stream, but he was never seen again, alive, and when on Monday morning his shop was not open as usual and search was made for him his body was found at the bottom of a deep pool in the creek. In his grasp was a quart bottle, securely stopped, and containing several good drams, and there was a smile on his face. The presumption seemed to be that the bottle had fallen into the water, and poor old Tobe had been drowned in an effort to rescue it; or else, he, himself had rolled in, bottle in hand, and was too far gone in liquor to save himself. In my opinion it was one or the other. Nevertheless, the precise manner in which he met his death was the subject of animated and, I may say, heated discus-

sions in Oldfields. There were not wanting those who darkly hinted at murder, and some suggestions of self-destruction were made.

We were talking it over one night in the following week at Finnegan's. Doc Humes was there, Squire Buckley, Sim Drake and the author of these chronicles. Obe Crews presided, of course, behind the bar. Doc made the following motion, to put the question, he said, in the proper parliamentary form for discussion:

Resolved, that it is the sense of this meeting that Tobe Elkins got drowned in Stoner Creek on Sunday, the 13th day of October, in the year of our Lord 1850, in the attempt to rescue his bottle from the water.

Squire Buckley moved to amend by striking out the words after the figures 1850, and substituting the following: by rolling into the water, bottle in hand.

Obe ruled that the question was on the amendment, but that debate would be allowed along both lines. And then we had it up and down. The strongest point that the Squire made was that a man who loved liquor as much as Tobe Elkins did would never have been separated from his bottle for a moment and that therefore he fell in with it in his hand. I agreed with him. But Doc Humes contended with great force that the smile on Tobe's face when he was found with the bottle firmly grasped in his hand and with several drams still uncontaminated by water, proved that the bottle fell in first; that Tobe plunged in to save it and that when he got hold of it and saw that there was liquor in it he smiled a smile that not even death itself could obliterate. That smile, said Doc, was a natural smile—a smile that any man would

have had—and was not to be accounted for in any other way. I thought the argument unanswerable. When Sim Drake got the floor he was too drunk to hold it, and Obe quickly observing the maudlin character of his remarks, ruled him out of order and made him sit down. Obe then called me to the chair—I am a quiet body and never open my mouth in public—and took the floor himself. O, I wish I could remember all he said on that occasion! Some one has well said, “The next best thing to being witty one’s self is to be able to quote another’s wit.” Such quips and quirks! Such twists and turns!

As the poet has it:

“His eye begets occasion for his wit;
For every object that the one doth catch,
The other turns to a mirth-moving jest.”

At one time you would think that he was on Squire Buckley’s side but presently he appeared to be supporting Doc Humes; while, again, in a jiffy, as it were, he would strike out a theory of the case for himself, to be quickly abandoned for some other notion.

Finally he resumed the chair and put the question on the amendment. Squire Buckley voted Aye, and Doc Humes voted No. Sim Drake was fast asleep, and I declined to vote, the truth being that for the life of me I couldn’t make up my mind about it. Obe ruled that a motion to postpone the discussion was in order and he made the motion himself and declared it carried. Then he observed: “Gentlemen, fill your glasses. We drink to the memory of Tobe Elkins. Whatsoever may have been the way in which he met

his death he has gone from our midst, never to be seen again in this world; that is certain. Never again will the sparks fly from under his hammer. The smoke pours out no more from his shop chimney, for the fire is dead and the ashes are cold on the fire-place. Gentlemen, there is a lesson in this sad fatality for all of us. Gentlemen,"—his voice was tremulous with emotion and a tear stole down the side of his nose. "Gentlemen," said he, "when a man is a drinking of liquor he ought to keep away from deep water." I was never so affected in my life.

The people who frequented Finnegan's Tavern were, as a rule, Obe's friends and fellow-townsmen in Oldfields; traveling salesmen who came in on the stage from Lawton, and farmers from the country precincts who rode to town horseback on Saturdays and County-court days. The salesmen came now and then, the farmers about once a week, and the town-folk every day. But once upon a time a stranger reined in his horse at the Tavern stile-block and some subsequent incidents in the life of this man so closely concern Obe Crews and some of Obe's friends that even the long story I must tell will be listened to, I hope.

A remarkable woman in Oldfields is

THE WIDOW RIPLEY

Catherine Henrietta Ripley is the relict of Jack Ripley, who went to his reward in 1844, the year of

the memorable contest for the presidency between Henry Clay and James K. Polk. Jack Ripley's death was so tragic that I must describe it. Every one will remember what a heated campaign that was, how personal and bitter the fight between the Democrats and the Whigs. Even here in peaceful and law-abiding Oldfields politics was at the fever point, and there were quarrels and deadly encounters that make me shiver now, though ten years have gone by, whenever I recall them. Jack Ripley was a Whig and Jim Bedinger was a Democrat, but until that year they had been good friends from boyhood days. Jim's wife was Jack's sister.

One court-day in June in front of Kelly's Tavern these two men got to talking politics. Both were hot-tempered and impulsive and it wasn't very long until they quarreled. Finally Jack said that Polk was nothing but a cur dog in Andrew Jackson's kennel; Jim called him a liar, and then the crowd scattered for people knew that something was going to happen. In a jiffy they drew their bowieknives and rushed together. With the first sweep of his arm Jack cut Jim's throat almost from ear to ear; and Jim, with his life-blood spurting all over his antagonist, disembowled him. Oh, it was terrible! Bedinger fell in his tracks and died; but Ripley holding his gushing entrails in his hands, staggered into Tom Whiteside's store before strength and life gave way.

The fight occurred at noon time and as I was returning home from my school, I was opposite the tavern when it began. Never in my life have I witnessed a thing so awful, and God forbid that I ever shall again.

But to resume. The widow Ripley's maiden name was Durelle, and it is said that one of her fore-fathers escaped from France after the repeal of the Edict of Nantes. She is a tall, large-framed woman, with strong features, a dark complexion and big black eyes which look out from under beetling eyebrows. I think that only a man of Jack Ripley's fool-hardiness would have had the courage to marry her. News of her husband's awful fate reached her immediately after the fight, and hurrying down town in her carriage, with her little daughter, Lucille, then some seven years of age, she had his body carried home, she and the child walking by the side of the carriage. Those who saw her said that never a moan escaped her, nor a tear, and that the expression on her face was something fearful to behold. She loved Jack with a most passionate love, and I am told that to this day she may be seen every evening, rain or shine, winter or summer, sitting by the grave, which she caused to be dug under a large oak tree near the house. 'Tis said by Doc Humes, the only man in Oldfields who knows her well, that she is a stranger to fear, and that her servants tremble in her presence, but that to Jack she was as gentle as a lioness in the company of its mate.

A month or two after those men slaughtered one another, Mrs. Bedinger, a frail, delicate little woman, ventured on a visit to her sister-in-law; but the latter saw her from her window, approaching, and met her with such a scowl on her face that poor Mrs. Bedinger turned and fled in terror.

Mention of that French ancestor of the widow's reminds me of what Obe Crews said one day to Sim

Drake. "Hundreds and hundreds of people," said Sim, "were driven from France in them days."

"Yes," said Obe, "they called them Huge Knots."

"What'd they call them that for?"

"Oh," replied Obe, with a grave face, "that is French for tough characters. They claimed that the Pope of Rome was an old fraud, and they were everlastingly trying to knock out his underpinning in France. They kept the country in an uproar and the King had to get rid of 'em."

Sim talks about the Huge Knots to this day and he says that the breed is not confined to the frog-eaters, and that he knows some Kentuckians—referring to the Democrats, for Sim is an ardent Whig—who are as tough as the old devil himself.

See how in the midst of serious things I go off at a tangent, as it were, maundering after such nonsensical remembrances. I know a fox hunter, who would rather ride after the hounds any day than eat a good dinner, who declares that a dog, on the trail of a fox, that will turn aside to chase a rabbit ought to be shot. Maybe he ought, though it would be hard on the dog; but all the same, I have an abiding fondness for the droll incidents of life; besides, my observation is that comedy is mixed up with tragedy in this world. It is like the stripes in a rag-carpet or the confusion of colors in a crazy-quilt—the thing was made that way.

But to resume. An incident in the Widow Ripley's life that is characteristic, closely concerns little Miss Tripper, the dressmaker, on whose gossipy proclivities I have heretofore animadverted. It got to the widow's ears in some way—isn't it marvelous, by the way, how quickly a piece of scandal permeates, as

it were, a whole community?—that little Miss Tripper was whispering around town that the widow was in love with Doc Humes. The moment Mrs. Ripley was certain of the fact she marched into the dress-maker's shop, and with never a word, she clutched the poor creature by the throat and all but choked her to death. Little Miss Tripper's helper, Samantha Cobs, says the widow Ripley lifted her victim from the floor as if she had been a bundle of feathers, and holding her aloft a moment, flung her across the shop and left her, a huddled heap of arms, legs and clothes in a corner of the room.

I wish it had been Miss Keats, instead. The little dressmaker is a mischief-hatching gossip, 'tis true, but nothing else can be expected of her; it's a part of her stock in trade, so to speak. Miss Keats occupies a different station in life, and then Miss Keats is such a hypocrite.

The widow's daughter, Lucille—Ah, I must take a new goose quill, a virgin pen, so to speak, if I am to write of her! It seems but yesterday, though it's now a year ago, I saw her one morning for the first time since she was a mere chit of a girl in short dresses and pantalettes. She had been away at school some four or five years, and now, behold, she was a young lady. I was walking slowly back and forth between the front gate and the porch of my little cottage, cogitating, I suppose, over something or other, as is my wont. The May day was young and Dinah, my old servant, was getting ready my matutinal meal. Hearing the sound of horses' feet up the road,—I live at the edge of town as you go to P——, I looked up and there was a sight worth seeing! I always said

that a woman looked her best on the back of a horse. The reason is plain. A well-groomed thoroughbred is a handsome animal, and if a woman has any pretensions to good looks, she shows at her best on horseback. For the same reason, I opine, this may be said of a man, also. Certainly the young couple who came down the road that morning, their horses loping side by side and seeming, themselves, to enjoy their companionship and the bright breezy day, made a beautiful sight, attractive and enjoyable even to an old dried-up schoolmaster, whose capacity for admiration is by no means unlimited. Somewhat to my surprise they reined in their steeds at my gate, and the girl called out in a clear, nice voice:

"Good morning, Dominie!" then getting but a stare from me through my spectacles, "Why, I don't believe he knows me! Don't you remember little Lucille, Dominie?"

"Bless my soul!" I said. "Is it possible? My dear young lady, you must excuse me, my eyes are not so good as they were once, and you have grown prodigiously. And how changed, too!"

As a young thing she had been all mouth and eyes, like a freshly hatched crow. She laughed quite heartily, and pointing with her whip-hand to her escort, she said,

"This is Mr. Burlingame, Dominie. Mr. Burlingame, let me introduce you to my old schoolmaster, Mr. Collins."

The young man raised his cap politely and said he was glad to meet me. I inquired after her mother's health—to save my manners—and presently she gave the rein to her horse and sped away town-wards, Mr.

Burlingame regaining his place by her side, and soon both were lost to my view.

"Well, well," I said to myself, I have a habit of talking to myself, "and the widow Ripley's girl has come back from school! What a fine looking creature she has grown to be, to be sure. And that chap with her, with his hair hanging down on his shoulders, who the devil can he be? Some young fool I suppose who wants to marry."

We Oldfields folk care nothing for outsiders; we naturally feel a little hostile towards them. I say *naturally*, because my reading teaches me that savages and even semi-civilized people have this antipathy to strangers; not meaning, however, to imply that we are either the one or the other. No, sir, not at all! The young man, it turned out, was the stranger at Finnegan's Tavern. Ah, if that morning I could have looked ahead a few months! What poor blind bats we mortals be! A few *months*, indeed! It's a term of reproach to say of a man, he can't see beyond his nose, but who can?

I always fear the future—its possible terrors and mischief are without limit. Who can say what a day will bring forth? When I was a youth it was otherwise with me. I looked forward to tomorrow, to next month, next year with all the pleasures of hope.

In less than half a year from that May morning—but let me tell the thing as it happened. Lucille Ripley met Mr. Burlingame for the first time in Richmond, Virginia, where she was visiting some of her father's people. He is a Louisianian, and was then a student in the University at Charlottesville. 'Twas a case of love at first sight, as the saying is, and the

young man after graduating in the law department of the University, came on to Oldfields, on his way South, to see his sweetheart and to get her mother's consent to the marriage, in case, as he said to the widow, he could get Lucille's. Of course the fact was that Lucille had already consented but her mother was to be formally consulted in the matter, on the pretense, for it was nothing more, that her willingness was a condition precedent, as the lawyers would say. The widow appeared to like the young fellow from the first; 'twas understood that he had inherited a fortune from his father; he was handsome in person, had been finely educated and his manner was agreeable and winning. He had no shadow of doubt that his suit would be favorably considered. Such, the general opinion in Oldfields seemed to be, was the state of affairs respecting these young people and the widow Ripley at the period which I have now reached in these veracious chronicles.

The beautiful Indian Summer of October was abroad in the land. The fifth day of that month being my birthday, the Squire had sent me a case of old Port; Obe Crews had, with his own hands, drawn out a gallon of twenty-year old whiskey from its dust covered barrel, and had brought it out to my cottage, and Doc Humes had made me a present of a box of real Havanas, along with a little box of Honey Dew from old Virginia. And so that night, though three score and ten, I was in fine feather and happy to have those three friends with their legs under my dinner table, and to find that my old Dinah had excelled herself in the meal she had cooked for us. Ah! what is better in this world than a good dinner? And what can

magnify and intensify, as it were, the enjoyment of it like the companionship of three or four congenial men! And what can tune 'em up, so to speak, and put 'em in such trim as a glass of old whiskey, into the amber depths of which a lump or two of white sugar has slowly melted away, loving to die, as it were, so sweet a death! And what can oil the gullet and wash down the oysters and the partridge on toast and the et ceteras so deliciously as old Port wine, that fruit of the marriage of the sunbeams and the purple juices of the grape that blushing hang on the south side of the hills in far away Portugal. Dear me, the simple memory of that evening warms the cockles of my old heart and makes me young again!

What saith the poet?

“Serenely full, the epicure would say,
Fate cannot harm me, I have dined today.”

All three of my friends were in good form that night, and I wish I could remember the things that were said, some of the droll things, especially, which made our faces beam.

Under the soft candle light I thought the Squire never looked so handsome and so benignant. Obe Crews' little gray eyes twinkled like twin stars, and Doc Humes fairly made the rafters tremble with his great laugh.

The Squire said afterwards that the Dominie, your humble servant, presiding over the small but groaning table, was the combined likeness of Abraham and the Grecian God, Bacchus. I opine that I was indebted to my long white beard, and my ruddy

complexion for the droll compliment. Along towards the latter part of the meal Doc Humes, observing Dinah at the back of my chair, arose from his and said:

"Gentlemen, fill your glasses; we drink to the health of the best cook in Kentucky. Dinah, may you live long, and may your hand never forget its cunning. When you die and go to heaven the good God will say, 'Welcome, Dinah, take a seat over yonder with Squire Buckley, Obe Crews and the Dominie and old Doc Humes. In life your beautiful cooking gave them much pleasure. Here in heaven share its joys and its honors with them.'"

Full of fun and good feeling we all drank the toast, while Dinah, ample bosomed, and with a periphery, so to speak, under her apron strings, that rivaled a sugar hogshead, beamed and grinned and I dare say would have curtsied if such a thing were possible to her rotund figure.

"You gemmens," she said, "des is makin' a fool o' dis poor old nigger. You is dat."

When dinner was over we adjourned to my little sitting-room—sitting-room and library in one—and after we had lighted our cigars Doc Humes said he had a matter to broach on which he wanted our counsel and help.

"You know," he said, "how devoted that young Burlingame is to the widow Ripley's girl. I supposed they would be married before a great while. Well, the widow sent for me this morning and it looks like there's trouble in the air for them. She has heard, in some way, that"—and here Doc Humes, lifting his hand and bending forward in his chair, gathered our

glances in one bunch, as it were,—*the young chap has negro blood in his veins.*”

Imagine our amazement to hear such a thing!

“Little Miss Tripper!” exclaimed Obe Crews.

“Miss Keats!” I said.

The Squire said nothing. Doc Humes resumed: “She did not tell me the source of her information, but I managed to gather that it comes from New Orleans, and she considers it reliable. Now, strong and self-reliant as the widow is, she confesses that she feels the need of counsel in this matter, and she asked me what she ought to do. I told her I would have to take time to think the matter over, and just then it occurred to me that I would like to have your assistance, and so I said that I thought I could be of better service to her if she would give me the right to use the information in whatever way I considered best, between then and tomorrow, when I am to go and see her again. After a little more talk she consented and now, gentlemen, confiding in your discretion, I want to hear from you. What is to be done in this matter?”

’Twas too much for me; I knew that instantly. Obe Crews sat and stared into the empty fire-place as if he was expecting something down the chimney. The Squire buried his chin in his stock and seemed to be counting the buttons on his vest. Doc looked from one to the other inquiringly, but for two minutes no man said a word. Obe was the first to open his mouth.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “if the widow Ripley is satisfied that that fellow is part nigger I suggest that I

be appointed a committee of one to take him to the town limits and tell him good-bye."

"Oh!" I exclaimed, "that'll never do. He—why, suppose he refused to go?"

"Dominie," Obe replied, "he will not refuse. I'll invite him to take a walk. You know he stops at my tavern and we are on good terms. I'll ask him to take a stroll with me, and when we get a little beyond the Squire's place I'll tell him that the big road runs south and that he'd better take it and never turn back. And I'll bet a bottle of ten-year-old to a broken cork-screw he'll go."

"It's heavy odds," said the Squire, "but, Obe, I believe you'd win." And he smiled one of his beautiful smiles. "And," he continued, "what a direct way your mind works in; it's wonderful! Why, if the Angel Gabriel should blow his trumpet this minute you would know by instinct the bee-line to the heavenly gates and would get to them while the rest of us were pricking our ears or rubbing our eyes or wallowing around in the clouds looking for the right road. But the shortest road is not always the one that ought to be taken; especially in this sort of thing. Doc," turning to Doc Humes, who was now slowly rubbing his thumb and forefinger up and down his prodigious nose, as if he was milking his brains, as it were, "do you know anybody in New Orleans?"

"Yes," answered Doc, "I know a considerable lot of people down there; I reckon a hundred at least. I see where you are, Squire, and I think I can fill the bill exactly. A life-long friend of mine and a brother doctor in New Orleans is Sam Weatherby, a fine man

anyway you take him, and he knows everybody worth knowing in all that country."

"Good," said the Squire. "Tell the widow tomorrow that for certain reasons you will not be able to advise her definitely for a month, and possibly for two months, and that she must give you all the time you need; and in the meantime she must receive Burlingame and try to treat him well. And now you all see the bent of this; I propose we adjourn the subject until Doc calls us together; and if the Dominie will make up another toddy, we'll see whether we can worry it down."

As I said, that talk took place at my house on the night of the 5th day of October. On the 23rd of November, following, we were again seated in my little sitting-room—the Squire, Doc Humes, Obe Crews and I. Doc had heard from New Orleans and we had met to learn the import of his news, and to determine what ought to be done.

Burlingame has negro blood in him! That's certain. Doc's New Orleans friend knew the fellow's father and mother. The father was a wealthy sugar planter who became infatuated with a beautiful octoroon and married her, and this boy is the fruit of the marriage. His father died several years ago, leaving his estate to the mother and son, jointly. The mother is living on one of the Louisiana plantations. She is unmistakably and certainly an octoroon; she is well known in New Orleans and the fact of her mixed blood is a matter of general knowledge. In the social circle to which they are restricted mother and son stand well and are very popular.

The foregoing is in substance the information Doc received.

"And, now, gentlemen," said he, shifting his cud, as we say, and all but extinguishing my fire with a prodigious expectoration, "here is a piece of business that is most delicate and about the damndest I ever had anything to do with in my life. What counsel am I to give the widow Ripley? That's the question; let's hear from you."

The Squire, in his favorite cogitating position, seemed to be engaged in counting the buttons on his waistcoat. Obe Crews, stretched out in his chair, his shrewd face turned upward and a cigar in his mouth at an angle which brought the end of it dangerously near his nose, was ready, as usual, with his opinion. "I stick to what I said when we were here before," he began. "The thing to do is to get that chap away from here before the Four Mile Ripleys hear of this thing."

I step aside, as it were, to explain right here that Dan Ripley of Four Mile Creek, is a brother of Jack's, and that he has some boys that are regular devils when they get excited. Dan is as poor as a town cow but proud as a prince. He doesn't own a negro in the world; it's common knowledge that there isn't a whole suit of unpatched clothes in the family; he and his boys are Democrats, and the feeling between the Four Mile Ripleys and the Oldfields Ripleys is as cold as ice; but all the same if Dan and those boys of his were to hear that a man with negro blood in him was paying court to Lucille, God knows what would be the result.

"Get him clean away," continued Obe, "for if he

stays he'll be killed just as certain as the sun rises and sets. I'll undertake to show him how unhealthy this climate is, for him. I hear tell that down in Orleans there's all sorts of people, Niggers, Creoles, French, Spanish and a sprinklin' of white folks, and I spose it's natural to mix up generally, but we know it won't do here. Get that boy away, and lose no time about it."

Having so delivered himself, Obe sat up in his chair, and seeing that the Squire was still in a brown study, as the saying is, looked at me as if to question my judgment on his remarks. Now, it's this way with me: All my life I have had great difficulty in making up my mind about things. Excepting the question of religion, as to which, fortunately, my dear old father, who is now a saint in heaven, put me in the right way when I was a child,—excepting that, which by the way, I consider the only really important matter, I live in a state of doubt, so to speak, about most things men concern themselves with on this terrestrial globe. I say most things, for as to women I have decided views, but politics, for instance, and some of the sciences, so-called, and the question of slavery—as to such things as those, sometimes I am disposed to take one view and sometimes another. But whatever the subject that comes up for discussion, I find that I am a poor hand to argue, as Sim Drake says when anyone asks if he won't take a dram, and so usually I have but little to say. Here on this occasion I couldn't see my way clear to advise one course or another. To say to young Burlingame that he must leave the state, seemed a very arbitrary thing to do, a thing that we had no right to do. On

the other hand to have him stay, and in all probability come to a violent end at the hands of Lucille's kinsmen, would be most distressing. I considered the thing this way and that way. And so I said it was a huckleberry above my persimmon, a droll phrase common in these parts.

At last the Squire raised his head. "Gentlemen," he said, "the thing to do is to advise the widow Ripley to take her daughter and go down to New Orleans. The young man will go with them as a matter of course. 'Twon't be long before the girl will find out, down there, that something is wrong. One thing will lead to another until finally the whole situation will be revealed to her, and, when it is, one of two things will happen. She will either agree with her mother that marriage is not to be thought of and send Mr. Burlingame to the right about, or she will take the bit in her mouth and marry him in spite of her mother, public opinion and possible consequences. Being a woman, which of these courses she'll take is beyond the foreknowledge of God. However that may be, I think the wisest thing the widow can do is to go."

When we had heard the Squire through all doubt ceased to exist. 'Pon my word, even I could see that he was right. What a beautiful thing is wisdom! How, when clouds and darkness encompass us, and we know not which way to turn, wisdom dissipates them and shows us the right road! It is like the morning sun when he bulges up above some mountain peak and throws his rays down into the valley, melting and disintegrating, as it were, the dank vapors, and revealing rock and stream, grass and flowers,

and setting all the little birds to warbling their praises to God Almighty!

What saith the poet?

“Teach me my days to number, and apply
My trembling heart to wisdom.”

Who was it that said the best laid plans of mice and men go wrong sometimes, or words to that effect? Well, our plans about young Burlingame came all to naught; but from no fault in the plans, that's one comfort. If things had worked out according to the Squire's advice it is certain that whatever may have been the ultimate outcome, the awful tragedy I am about to relate would not have taken place, at least on Kentucky soil.

Two days after the conference at my house, as I was passing Finnegan's Tavern, Obe Crews called me in and told me he had just heard that Dan Ripley and two of his boys were in town; that they were at Kelly's Tavern liquoring-up, getting very ugly, and it was possible that trouble was brewing, as the things we knew about Burlingame may have leaked out in some way and got to their ears.

The widow Ripley and her girl were now well on their way to Louisville, and Burlingame had settled his tavern bill that day and had told Obe he would start the next morning, horseback, with the purpose to get to Louisville in time for the next boat down the river. While we were talking Sim Drake came in and said he had overheard Dan and the boys talking together on the back porch of Kelly's Tavern; that he could not make out all that was said but it was some-

thing about Burlingame, and he saw all three of them loading their pistols.

No time was now to be lost. Obe sent out for Doc Humes and the Squire and presently we four were closeted in Obe's private room, consulting what was to be done. The upshot was that Burlingame was hunted up by Obe and brought to the room and there Doc Humes said to him :

"Mr. Burlingame, the Four Mile Ripleys, uncle and cousins of Miss Lucille, are in town and for some reason or other they intend to do you a mischief. Perhaps you surmise what has excited their hostility; if so, there's no need that we tell you what's up."

The young man's face flushed considerably, but his voice betrayed no emotion when he replied :

"I think I know, gentlemen; but may I inquire why you have sent for me—what you desire to say to me?"

"It's just this," said Doc, "there aren't three men in the state more desperate and dangerous when aroused than Dan Ripley and those boys of his. Under circumstances which I will not stop to explain but, you must take my word as a gentleman when I say it, which warranted me in concerning myself to some extent in your affairs and in consulting these friends, I advised the widow Ripley to take her daughter and go south, and, as you know, they have left Oldfields. We thought you would go with them, and, as matters have now turned out we are sorry you did not. Every moment you delay your departure endangers your life, and we now urge you that at night-fall you mount your horse and put as many miles between you and Oldfields by morning as you can."

Burlingame had sat down facing us, but now he rose from his chair, his face somewhat pale and his dark eyes flashing like fire. He is fully six feet high, broad shouldered and straight as an arrow, and as he stood before us, his long, black hair thrown back from his forehead, I thought I had never seen a finer specimen of young manhood in my life.

"Doctor," he said, "and gentlemen, I thank you for the interest you take in this matter. I do not doubt that your motives are excellent. From your standpoint, the standpoint of elderly men, prudent, I dare say, and discreet, I ought to take your advice. But let me say to you that I have wronged no man. I came to your little town in broad daylight and I propose to leave it in broad daylight. I will not sneak out of Oldfields between suns. Were I to do as you advise I think my father would turn in his grave. I have given orders that my horse be at the front door of this tavern tomorrow morning at nine o'clock. I will go then and not before, and if any man or set of men offer me violence I trust I will be able to acquit myself as the son of an honorable man should. Gentlemen, again I thank you."

With that he bowed most politely, and, turning, walked out of the room. When the door had closed behind him the Squire spoke up:

"What is it that makes us admire a brave man," said he, "even though he acts the fool? That boy will be killed tomorrow, but if it was my own son I—oh, well, there's no use saying anything more. Obe, set out your bottle. We will drink to his health."

When we had filled our glasses, Obe stood up and said:

"Gentlemen, there *is* one thing more to be said and Obe Crews is going to say it; I'm going to ride to Lawton tomorrow with that boy, if Dan Ripley, and Dan Ripley's brats and all hell is on his trail."

The next evening when the stage from Lawton reached the top of the hill, everybody noticed that the driver didn't blow his horn. Always theretofore, the moment the team struck a trot the notes of that horn came floating down the air, awaking the echo, and bringing men, women and children to the open; but on this occasion the trot wasn't much more than a dog-trot, and the horn was silent. Hours before, Oldfields had an inkling of the threatened mischief, and when the stage drew slowly up to the door of Finnegan's Tavern, imagine the interest of the gathered crowd, and the grief, to see on the inside the burly figure of Doc Humes holding in his arms poor old Obe as limp as a rag and as pale as death. Yonder ten miles away on the Lawton pike, lay Dan Ripley and his two sons stiff and stark, awaiting the coroner, and young Burlingame in a farm house, desperately wounded, his life hanging between this world and the next.

Another Oldfieldian, entangled, as it were, in my story is

DAVE HOLDEM

The other sons of Dan Ripley swore vengeance against Burlingame and Obe Crews, so the friends of

the last named,—the idea was the Squire's,—managed to get the grand jury to indict him, and, as soon as he could be moved, to have him sent to jail for his own protection, believing that in due time a jury would acquit him, and that, meanwhile, something could be done toward allaying the anger of his enemies. In both of these respects, as the result showed, the Squire's wisdom was made manifest, and these chronicles will probably contain nothing further connected with that desperate encounter out on the Lawton pike. But Obe's imprisonment and experiences in jail afford me a fine chance to draw a pen picture of our jailer, Dave Holdem, who is one of the drollest creatures in Oldfields. Literally and in sober fact Dave was born in jail and has been in jail all his life, seeing that his father before him was jailer and that our jail house is so built that the prisoner's cells and the dwelling rooms of the jailer are all under one roof, the only difference between them being that the cells have barred windows and iron doors, while the dwelling rooms are the ordinary rooms of a decent residence.

When old Tom Holdem went to his reward in the early forties and was laid away in a narrow cell—one harder to escape from than any of those he had ever confined hog-thieves or murderers in—his son Dave succeeded to the office and its gruesome but indispensable duties, so characterized by me because, as everybody knows, the jailer must not only keep human beings under lock and key; but he must execute the judgments of the court and apply the lash to the bare backs of petty offenders; tie the rope around the necks of those who are condemned to be hung “until

they are dead," and adjust the black cap over the faces of the miserable wretches at the last moment.

Reverend Spooner has a favorite sermon in which, to use his words, he "uncaps hell," and shows the fiends in that awful place torturing poor sinners, pouring melted lead down their throats, or with three-pronged pitchforks, tossing 'em back into the flames when, in their unspeakable agony, they have wriggled out. I can understand how *they* can find a delight in such a business, seeing that they are in hell themselves and that it's the only pleasure the place affords; but I can't understand how a human being can, of his own free will, lock himself up in a jail and cowhide the backs of poor thieving negroes or touch the spring that lets a shaking, horror-stricken man drop to eternity! Think of all the outside world with its sunshine, its birds and its flowers, its pleasant duties and its innocent enjoyments to be had for the choosing! Think of these in comparison with a jailer's life!

But to resume. As I say, Dave Holdem was born and raised in jail. From earliest infancy the swish of the cowhide and the scream of the victim were sounds familiar to his ears, and never a murderer paid the penalty of his crime but what Dave witnessed the awful scene, from the rope knotting and the black cap to the last tremor of body and limbs.

'Tis said that at one time in his boyhood days he reaped large profits in the way of apples and marbles from other boys for smuggling them into the jail-yard to see a hanging-bee, so to speak, but that his appetite for accumulating riches got so keen and such a crowd of urchins gained admittance, his father was com-

pelled to break up the business. Used to such sounds and sights all his life, Dave, who, by nature, is not unkindly, and who is of a philosophical turn of mind, withal, got to classifying human beings into the outsiders and the insiders, the former being, in his estimation, potential insiders, and the latter he divided into what he called the cow-hiders, and the neck-twisters. As a man in the cattle business takes note of every steer or calf he sees, naturally and as a matter of long habit, estimating their present and future worth to the butcher, fixing in his mind how they will cut up, how many choice steaks and prime roasts are in them, and forgetting not to take into his mental grasp the hide and the hoofs, so, in time, after Dave had succeeded his father in the jailer's office, he formed the habit of observing men from the jailer's standpoint, and in passing along the street he would look at a negro's back or a white man's neck from this professional coign of vantage, as it were, and would make approximate estimates respecting the stripes that could be laid on before the victim fainted, or the extent of the drop that would be required to break his neck bone.

I opine that men in other vocations, doctors, for instance, acquire similar mental habits. Sometimes I catch Doc Humes' eyes fastened on me with an expression that sends cold chills along my spinal column, for I am satisfied that for the moment he is not thinking of me as his old friend, Dominic Collins, but is taking stock, so to speak, of my anatomy, and cogitating as to whether my skeleton would be too long to hang up in his office closet, or whether there may not be some part of my viscera so abnormal as

to make a beautiful specimen for preservation in a jar of alcohol.

Getting back now to Dave Holdem—plague take this everlasting way I have of running after *rabbits!*—and to the time when Obe Crews was one of his *guests*, many are the occasions on which Obe has, in his inimitable way, told us of conversations he had with Dave and of occurrences he witnessed in the jail, one of which, as illustrating the droll idiosyncracies of the jailer, I will endeavor to embalm, so to speak, in these veracious Chronicles.

One of our star nights, as I shall fondly call those evenings when the Squire, Doc Humes, Obe Crews and this historiographer are snugly housed and dining together, we were the recipients of the Squire's hospitality. Obe was, as usual, in fine feather, and he told us of a whipping scene in the jail yard which he peeped out on from his window. It was night time, and Dave supposed that with the exception of himself and his negro prisoner the inmates of his household were wrapped in the arms of Morpheus, if such a poetical expression is permissible in respect of Dave Holdem, who has no more knowledge of the classics than a horse. How suggestive and beautiful are many of the mythological stories of the Ancients, and what a pity it—but here I go again!

Old Sam Anderson's George is a very religious negro. All negroes are religious, but George is very religious, being one of the pillars of his church, a great exhorter, and considered by his sable brethren and sisters as "powerful in prayer." But George was tempted of the devil and he fell, just as many a better man in this sinful world. My old cook, Dinah, had a

little roly-poly of a Berkshire pig penned up at the back of her kitchen that she was feeding on corn, boiled potatoes and clabber to get him in fine fetter for Christmas, which, as the negroes say, "was jist ober de hill." He was as fat as butter, and when nicely dressed and roasted he would have "made a dog bite his daddy," to use one of Obe Crews' droll expressions. But only two nights before the holidays the pig was "lifted," and the next morning when Dinah went to give him his breakfast, alas! he was gone.

A little quiet detective work I set on foot resulted in the arrest of George, who was tried and found guilty of the stealing, and was sentenced to receive thirty-nine lashes on his bare back.

Obe says that for several days before the whipping was to be inflicted Dave Holdem would go into George's cell and talk to him about it, recalling, with much detail, instances of previous whippings prisoners had undergone, how painful they were, how the victims writhed and groaned, and so forth and so forth. At last George's time came. As I said, it was

"The witching hour of night

When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world,"

as the poet hath it. The moon was at the full,—the condition of that planet when our farmers say it is the right time to plant potatoes or lay a worm fence (or it is *not* the right time, I forget which), and her beams suffused the little jail yard with soft light. Obe, peeping from his nearby window, could see and hear all that was done and said.

George first came through the shadowed doorway into the moonlight, with a ball and chain on his leg, and stripped to the waist. Dave followed him with slow, measured strides, holding in his hand a long, blue cowhide, large at the butt and tapering away to a sharp point. The pesky thing, said Obe, seemed to undulate in Dave's hand like a snake.

"Now George," the jailer's voice was deep and solemn, "the hour is at hand. I can't postpone this whippin' another minute. If I did I would be impeached, and God only knows what kind of hands you would fall into the next pig you stole."

"Oh, Marse Dave," exclaimed George, "don't say anything further about dat pig. I *did* steal him, and dat ain't all, I eat him, but fore God, I des couldn't help it. Whup me and lemme go."

"Ah George," said Dave, with a sigh, "see how unregenerate is the human heart! How deceitful too, and wicked beyond measure. Turn your face to the wall, George, and clasp that wooden peg just above your head."

George did as he was told.

"Dear God," sighed Dave, "what a soft satin-like skin you have, George!"

He raised his arm and brought the long, slim cowhide down on the poor devil's back with a swish! that made Obe shiver.

George groaned with pain.

"The Lord Jesus Christ," said Dave, talking through his nose, "is my witness that I'd give a year's fees to be absolved from this unpleasant duty."

Another cruel lash across George's back.

"My feelings," continued Dave, "are so overcome I don't see how I am to proceed."

"Oh, Marse Dave," groaned George, "please hurry up and lemme go."

And so, said Obe, the thing went on to the end, George begging to hasten it and be done, and Dave interlarding, as it were, the lashes with ejaculations, exclamations of admiration for George's beautiful skin, of pity, of admonition as to his future pig stealing, and of self-condoling at his cruel task.

At last when the thirty-nine lashes had all been inflicted, Dave said:

"There, George, my awful duty has been performed. Go to your cell and lie down to pleasant dreams. In the morning I will give you your breakfast and set you free. And, George, try to remember what I say: The way of the transgressor is hard. The Bible says so, and you know now from personal experience how true it is. And the Bible also says that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. Treasure up these things in your heart, and the next time you steal a pig don't leave any shoe tracks to betray you—go in your sock's-feet."

OBE CREWS' VISIT TO THE MUD LICK SPRINGS

The Mud Lick Springs are situated in the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains on the classic waters of Lulbegrud, which is one of the tributaries of the

Big Sandy. The country round about the Springs is broken and rough, constituting a fitting habitat for the natives, a lot of ignorant, unkempt people, living in log cabins and cultivating little pieces of ground in which they raise a few potatoes, string-beans and cucumbers. The women do all the work, as the men scorn any kind of labor except distilling, in a crude fashion, a villainous quality of liquor called apple jack, which they drink as soon as it is made, and which has the faculty, so to speak, of arousing in them more meanness and devilment than any liquor ever did in other parts of the world. Making and drinking this apple jack, and hunting coons and wildcats for their skins, consume the hours they give to peace, while shooting one another from behind a rock or bush when a vendetta is raging is the way in which they carry on war. The buildings for the accommodation of the guests at the Springs consist of one long, narrow structure of logs and clap-boards, in which are the office and bar-room, dining-room and kitchen; a dozen cabins, which are the bed-rooms, and some sheds divided by poles into stalls for the horses. Located in different directions and at various distances are the springs,—a medley of waters, black sulphur, white sulphur, chalybeate and oil,—to which rough paths lead from the main building and the bedroom cabins.

The proprietor and major-domo of the Mud Lick Springs is Col. Oliver Tompkins, a man some sixty years of age, red-faced, broad-shouldered, prodigious of stomach and bandy-legged to such a degree that these lower limbs appear to be bending and giving away under the great weight of his body. His man-

ner is imposing and pompous, and people call him *Lord Tompkins*. His principal assistant and right bower, so to speak, is his son, Thaddeus, a young man about thirty years old, who sports a white shirt, sticks his breeches in his red-topped boots, and is devoted to the society of the ladies. In the season, that is, in the summer time, when guests are at the Springs, Lord Tompkins is seen in all the glory of a swallow-tailed, blue cloth coat with brass buttons, a buff waist-coat and nankeen breeches, and Thaddeus is similarly arrayed, the only difference being that whereas the son wears red-topped boots and stuffs his breeches in them, as I have remarked, his father incases his large feet in silver-buckled shoes, over which the nankeens fit tightly.

The waters of the Springs are supposed to have medical virtues of unparalleled quality. It must be confessed that invalids who spend a season at the Mud Licks in search of health and who really have nothing the matter with them, go away fully restored, and that those who are diseased receive no harm, which I opine is as much as can be said for any springs.

One summer not many years ago Obe Crews concluded that he would spend a few weeks at the Mud Licks.

"I'm a poor water drinker," said Obe, "and Lord Tompkins' liquor is too fresh for my stomach; but I think the mountain air will do me good and I can send a jug or two of my own whiskey ahead by the stage in case I should get thirsty."

And so bright and early on a July day Obe had his trusty steed, Blue John, saddled and bridled and

led around to the front door of Finnegan's Tavern, ready to be mounted for the journey. The distance from Oldfields to the Mud Licks is about fifty miles and Obe calculated he could make it in two days, resting man and beast at the end of the first day at Sterling, which is half way. His saddle-bags, containing an extra shirt and pair of socks and a good sized, silver cased bottle, having been carefully thrown over the saddle, Obe mounted Blue John from the stile-block, a coign of vantage very necessary to a man of his rotund build, and started on his trip to the Springs. The incidents of the ride and of his sojourn at the Springs were told by him on his return and in some respects are as marvellous as those recounted of Ulysses in classic story.

At Sterling, where he purposed taking a bed for the night, he saw two men at supper who are worthy of particular mention. Nimrod Fontaine and Silas Crabtree are men of wide and droll repute, seeing that it is said of each that he is the homeliest man in the State; and indeed, paradoxical as it sounds, I believe it is entirely true. Crabtree is so ugly that if you see him alone, that is, not in Fontaine's presence, you will say it is not possible for another to be as much so; and in Fontaine's case it is the same. But if you see them together the aggregation of ugliness is so prodigious that it staggers and confuses the judgment. I hesitate to attempt a word painting of these men. 'Twould fail to represent them faithfully enough to be recognized, because they are so much homelier than my description could possibly be. I will only say that Fontaine's mouth is so misplaced that it has somewhat the position with respect to his

left ear that the coal hole has to the window directly above it, and his tongue hangs out of it like a tired dog's, while Crabtree's features are as formless and unhuman as the hide of a beef lying in a heap on the floor of a butcher shop. Formerly they lived on adjoining farms in Boone County and were good friends, but one day a thing occurred which radically altered these relations. Crabtree rode over to Fontaine's place and the latter seeing him nearing the stile-block, hastened out to meet him.

"Silas," he said, "don't light, for God's sake."

"What d'ye mean?" asked Crabtree, surprised.

"Excuse me, Silas," answered Fontaine, "you must excuse me, but my wife is in a delicate condition and a sight of you might be disastrous."

Crabtree stared at his old friend in blank amazement for a moment, then realizing how personal and pointed the objection was he stiffened up in his saddle and replied: "Nimrod!"—his voice was thick and hoarse—"If Mrs. Fontaine can see you and suffer no shock she can face a frowning world."

Whirling his horse he galloped away and never spoke to Fontaine afterwards. Indeed he was so wounded and annoyed that he sold his farm and moved into another county. Obe Crews entered the dining-room of the Sterling Tavern and found these two men facing each other at the supper table. Alone they sat and ate their meal in silence, grum, sullen and unhappy! It must have been very droll. The next morning, rested and refreshed, he resumed his journey, and by noon had reached the left bank of Lulbegrud, some ten miles below the Mud Lick Springs. Here he dismounted, being happily aided

in so doing by a tree stump, and taking his saddlebags and saddle and blanket from Blue John's sweating back, he watered his faithful animal in the stream and then, while permitting him to wander near and crop the grass, he discussed a ham sandwich and what was left of the whiskey in his bottle, as he reclined comfortably in the deep shade of a mountain ash. Being thus pleasantly engaged and surmising as to whether old Nick Bolson, the stage driver, had safely carried his jugs on to the Licks, he had not seen nor heard the approach of a mountaineer, who with a long squirrel rifle on his shoulder suddenly stood before him, looking down on him with a pair of small gray eyes and saying never a word.

"Hello!" exclaimed Obe, "where the devil did you come from?"

The stranger made no reply, but a broad smile wrinkled his sharp hatchet face and disclosed white teeth evenly set in his strong jaws.

"Well, mister," resumed Obe, "if you can talk I 'spose you will when you get good and ready; take your time, I'm in no hurry. Have a snort?" He handed his bottle up to the taciturn native, who took it and drank a hearty drink and returned it to Obe.

"Where be you from?" he asked of Obe.

"I'm from Oldfields," said Obe, "my name is Obe Crews; I keep the Finnegan Tavern down there, and I'm bound for the Mud Licks. If you want to know anything else, ask me."

The twinkle of good-natured fun in Obe's eyes and the friendly offer of his bottle evidently won the man's confidence. He slung his rifle from his shoul-

der, and placing it carefully against the tree, sat down facing Obe, saying as he did so:

"I've heard of you before. The old man was tuk sick once at your place and he told me about you when he kem home. I'm dem glad I met up with you. Hell's broke loose on upper Lulbegrud and I advise you to turn back the way you kem."

"What's the matter?" asked Obe, "another one of your damn mountain quarrels?"

"Yes," he replied, "another one, and about the worst that ever was. It's only three days old, this one, and three men has been shot, a'ready, which averages pooty high, don't you think?"

"What are they fighting about?" inquired Obe.

"Well, I don't know edzactly," he said. "The old uns fit it out years ago and killed one another; 'twas somethin' about a hound pup, and now the young uns is old enough to raise a gun and in course it is time to open her up again."

"Are you in the fight?" asked Obe.

"Not yit," the man replied, "but I see fur enough ahead to know that I will be. Ef you fling a shingle in Lulbegrud up yander at the Lick, 'twon't be long before it floats by us here. The last man that was killed was a second cousin of my wife, and I'll either have to take a hand, now, or Melindy'll kick me out of the cabin."

He picked up a stray straw and put one end in his mouth, slowly chewing on it, the while he gazed dreamily across the stream as if he was thinking of some abstract question in no way connected with his daily life. But he wasn't.

"'Pears like it's a pity," he resumed, "we have

to keep up these consarned quarrels, specially when black suckers is on the riffles. A feller can't fish to advantage and keep an eye on the bresh at the same time. Like as not just when your mind is all tuk up with the suckers, bang! goes a gun and over ye draps and Lulbegrud carries you off to the Big Sandy."

"And the wife and children may never know your fate?" queried Obe.

"Well generally speaking, they can make a pooty close guess," he replied, "but no one will ever be able to say how many fish you had in your bag."

Just then the sharp ring of a rifle pierced the evening air, a bullet cut through the crown of the stranger's hat, carrying with it some of his hair, and buried itself in the ash tree. Looking in the direction from which the sound came, Obe saw a little cloud of blue smoke hovering above the bushes a hundred yards away. His companion jumped to his feet, snatched up his gun and darted into the brush, Obe calling after him, "Good-bye, my friend; take care of yourself," then muttering in a droll, drawling way, "Well, what a nice pleasant people seem to live in these parts. If I had a lot of children, I think I would bring 'em up here to raise," he saddled his horse and contriving to mount him, pursued his journey.

Without further incident he reached the Mud Licks in good time for supper, which, after seeing Blue John stabled comfortably and well fed, he ate with a hearty appetite,—that finest of all sauces. Obe's stay at the Springs was very enjoyable. The weather was fine and he strolled about in the open air with Lord Tompkins as a companion, when the latter was at leisure, and he was fond of telling us after-

wards some of the conversations that took place between them, the Lord strutting by his side with a pompous air and talking, in his way, of his little domain with as much importance as the Czar of all the Russians might of his prodigious country. The distance and altitude of each mountain peak, the common names of trees and plants, the kinds and medicinal virtues of the Springs, the celebrated persons, who, from time to time, had been his guests, the characteristics of the mountaineers, the deadly feuds between the Hazzards and the Sterrits and the great respect they all had for *him*,—these things as well as his views on government, political parties, Clay and Jackson, and the war with Mexico were descanted upon, while Obe listened and observed his manner and the peculiarities of his ideas and of his language with infinite amusement. Possessing a retentive memory and a marvelous power of imitation, 'twas droll to hear him tell about it all when he returned.

I will repeat only one of those stories.

Obe says that quite a party of ladies and gentlemen from the blue-grass country was at the Springs during his visit, and there was also a learned gentleman from the north, whose "long suit," to use Obe's expression, was the science of Botany. One day those people had been out in the foothills and on their return to the Licks several of them had brought in specimens of shrubs and wild flowers, which from their strangeness or beauty, had interested them. Lord Tompkins and the Botanist and Obe, seeing them coming, went forward to meet them and one of the ladies holding up a large leafed plant said they were all wondering what it was. She appealed to the

learned man to tell them. He took it from her hand and informed them that it was the Magnolia—something or other—Obe could not remember the long Latin name but said it sounded like tomatella.

“What did you say that thing is?” inquired Lord Tompkins.

“The Magnolia,” (giving the rest of the name) said the Botanist, “a magnificent specimen.”

“Maggy Hell and Tommy git out,” exclaimed Lord Tompkins, “it’s the wild *Curkumber*.” Whereupon there was a great roar of laughter, in which the “lord” joined most heartily, for it was clear to his mind that he had unhorsed the Botanist.

Returning from the Mud Lick Springs, Obe was riding leisurely along the big road, when suddenly the blast from a bugle horn sounded loud and clear from a hillside to his left, and immediately thereafter a red fox bounded across the road, followed closely by a hound, and disappeared in the woods, the dog giving tongue beautifully. Then in quick succession came other hounds, baying in unison, and several men on horseback and riding like the devil was after them. Blue John pricked up his ears and taking the bit in his mouth, as we say, wheeled to the right and went over the twelfth rail in the worm fence like a deer. “All right, old boy,” said Obe, “if you say so, it’s a go.” Obe’s hat went one way and his saddle-bags another, but he kept his seat, and away they flew after the hounds.

Beyond the woods were a series of tillable fields, some in corn and others in new stubble, and just as Obe caught up with the two leading horsemen, the fox was crossing one of those stubble fields with the dogs

close behind him. Obe recognized Louis Henry but the man at Henry's side was a stranger to him, who turned out to be a fellow from Boston visiting friends in Kentucky and now on his first fox hunt.

"What dog is that in the lead?" Obe heard him ask Henry. The latter turned an excited countenance towards his Yankee acquaintance, and shouted back:

"You d——n fool, don't you know the history of your Country? That's Bedford's old Lute."

That ended the hunt as far as Obe was concerned. He got into such a fit of laughter that he couldn't stay in the saddle, and tumbling off Blue John's back, landing luckily on top of a heap of wheat straw, he rolled and roared while hounds and hunters whirled past him in the chase.

THE JINKINES

The Jinkines are people of no importance, being what I call just ordinary, common folks, but in one respect they are unlike anybody else and for this reason I include them in these Chronicles,—that is the male members of the family. As to the old woman and the girls nothing need be said. They are decent, well behaved creatures, but nothing in their ways or looks or acts affords any material for the historian.

The head of the family is old Nelson Jinkins, and there are six sons, father and sons all being large, heavy men and, with one exception, round shouldered,

stubby bearded and unkempt. Old Nelse is a sort of cabinetmaker but confines his handicraft to turning out bed-steads and coffins, supplying his fellow-man as Obe Crews once remarked, "With something to lay on while alive and something to lay in when dead." The sons are bachelors and have always remained under the parental roof, though considering the diminutive dimensions it's marvelous how they can find space enough to stretch out in the little story and a half cottage. They profess to be cabinetmakers, too, and claim to be working along with the "old man," as they call their father; but they spend the greater part of the time in fishing, hunting squirrels and partridges and whittling on a goods-box at the corner grocery. For the most part the foregoing remarks are not applicable to the oldest son, whose Christian name is Alexander Hamilton—Alexander Hamilton Jenkins! Alex is tall and heavy framed like his brothers, but unlike them he is square shouldered and holds himself erect, and like the lilies of the field he toils not neither does he spin—he is neither a follower of Isaak Walton, nor a Nimrod, and he whittleth not on a goods-box—yet Solomon in all his glory did not wear such spotless linen, nor such fine broadcloth. Alex is the gentleman of the Jenkins family. Obe Crews says it is not in nature for a man whose name is Alexander Hamilton Jenkins to soil his hands with labor or to wear anything meaner than a silk hat and hand-made boots freshly blackened every morning. Alex holds that the Jenkins family is entitled to one gentleman and that foreordination settled it that he was the favoured son. He fancies that he looks like Hamilton and that he has Hamilton's genius and he proposes to

give all his time to the consideration of public affairs, looking forward with confidence to the time when "the old man and the boys" will put by sufficient money by their joint labours to enable him to launch out on a public career. In the meantime he reads the newspapers and the Congressional Reports and talks politics at Kelly's Tavern with his companions. These associates of Alex's are some half dozen young men of Oldfields, of good families, and bad habits, who wear pistols and bowie-knives, drink quantities of whiskey and have much to say about duels and high points of honour. I am sorry to know that Judge Summers' son and one of Doc Humes' are among the number. I don't know what the Judge thinks of his boy, as I never heard him express himself; but Doc Humes makes no greens, as the saying is, in speaking very frankly about his. He says he has tried faithfully to shame him out of his ways and make a man of him, but all to no purpose and that if a young man twenty-five years old is bent on going to the devil no earthly power can prevent it. Alex Jenkins is a boon companion of those young scape-graces, but at the same time they do not lose sight of the fact nor permit him to forget that he is really much below them in point of birth and blood. Alex's hair hangs down on his shoulders like theirs, in true Cavalier fashion; his hat and boots, and his broad-cloth clothes are just as fine, and he always has money in his pocket to defray a full measure of the bar expenses and to pay his small losses at cards. His hands are white and soft like theirs, but he knows he is not their equal and that any one of them when in liquor is apt to remind him of it in plain words. All the same, such is the loftiness of his soul,

that he cannot endure life away from them and he is grateful that they permit his company.

Now here comes the remarkable fact in respect of this Jenkins family: All of them, "the old man" and Alex's brothers,—and I dare say his mother and sisters,—are proud of Alex! They pay his tailor's and his boot-maker's bills, and give him pocket money; and when he starts up town after breakfasting alone at ten or eleven o'clock they watch him strut away and their honest hearts swell with pride and satisfaction to think that *their* Alex can go and spend his time with the blue-bloods. Year in and year out Alex has followed this life at their expense, never striking a lick of work, bearing himself towards them with a lordly condescension, coming home when the chickens are crowing for day, with dull eyes and staggering steps, and yet not a murmur is heard.

People talk and laugh about it but to my mind it is prodigiously pitiful, and the Squire is of my opinion. Said he, the other day, "If I was Autocrat of Oldfields I'd strip the broad-cloth from Alex's back and put him to some honest labour for the rest of his life; but in doing so I suppose I would sorely wound the feelings of his family."

GREENBERRY CRUPPLES, J. P.

The Chronicles of Oldfields would be incomplete if they were silent in respect of Greenberry Crupples. In one of his droll plays the divine William makes

Dogberry enquire "who is the most fit and senseless man to be made Constable of the Watch?" The principle of selection, the qualifications indicated, must surely be the same in choosing a Justice of the Peace, for most truly is it the fact that no man ever saw one of these officers who had sense enough to know his right ear from his left. It is a mystery most strange and inexplicable that in a community in which solid men of sense are not wanting a justice of the peace is invariably the biggest noodle-head. Squire Buckley says that established custom and usage make law and that we have gone so far in the matter it would now be unlawful to appoint a man of sense to this office; that all the Arts and Sciences have their humorous side; note, for instance, in the science of Medicine, how there is the "stump" doctor, and the "root" doctor, and the doctor who cures everything with tar-water; and that the justice of the peace is a sort of joke in the law. Doctor Humes observed that Greenberry Crupples, as an officer of the law, was to be likened to an excrescence—that he is a sort of judicial wart or wen on the huge neck of the law, very ugly and disfiguring, but not removable without danger to the welfare of Jurisprudence. However all this may be Greenberry has been a justice of the peace in Oldfields for many a year, and some of his queer rulings and sage remarks have made our old town smile from one end of it to the other—if such a figure of speech is permissible.

Following my rule in the matter I must give a picture of the man. Know then that Greenberry is a small, thin man as respects his body, but that he has a large knobby head the fort part of which bulges out

on his face like the upper story of an old house, such as we see in some of Hogarth's pictures. His eyebrows are so heavy and bushy his little eyes are seen with difficulty and would not be noticed at all if the seeming want of them did not attract attention. His nose turns up at the end and his mouth turns down, and his chin is half hid in his neck-cloth. Before he became a Justice he followed his trade as a cobbler, but ever since, he has refused to drive a peg, deeming any manual labour beneath the dignity of his position. When he doffed his apron and threw aside his awl and bristles he appareled himself in a suit of solemn black which he has worn, says Drake, for twenty years without change, and which is now as sleek as glass along the elbows and at the knees. Marcellus Scraggs is Greenberry's Constable and ministerial factotum, and it is a sight for gods and men to see Greenberry holding court with Marcellus standing at his right hand, solemn as an owl and thoroughly impressed with the dignity of the Justice and the vast importance of his own position. Greenberry requires his Constable to open court with as much form and ceremony as Judge Summers has in term time. He stalks into his little one-story office, removes his beaver-hat and hands it to Marcellus, who hangs it up on a peg, takes his seat in an arm-chair behind his desk, draws a large bandanna handkerchief and blowing a trumpet note on his nose, says "Mister Constable, proceed to open this Court." Whereupon Marcellus in stentorian tones cries out:

"O Yes, O Yes, O Yes, the honourable Court of the Justice of the Peace for the precincts of Oldfields is now in session. Those who has pleas to plead will

now come forward or forever after hold his tongue!" At eight o'clock every morning and at one o'clock every evening, Thursdays and Sundays excepted, Greenberry takes the bench prepared to hear causes, criminal or civil, as the case may be, and about once a fortnight there is business of the one kind or the other before us. The rest of the time he devotes to thumbing an old greasy copy of a work on "Forms;" to conversing with any one who happens to drop in, and, in the absence of callers, to playing dominoes with Marcellus.

At the time of the Ripley-Bedinger trial, which will be found duly related in these Chronicles, Greenberry issued a writ de lunatico inquirendo and handing it to Marcellus, directed him to "summon the posse comitatus and have them here in this Court to duly investigate and return make as to whether the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth has been infringed upon, broke and violated." It was a warm summer day and when Marcellus succeeded in bringing in a dozen or dozen and a half of lawful citizens, including Doc Humes and Obe Crews—with Squire Buckley a looker-on,—the little office became crowded almost to the point of suffocation. Unhappily I was not there but Doc told me about it that night. Doc said that Greenberry had Marcellus open Court with the accustomed formality and seemed about ready to begin business when he noticed him turning and twisting, looking this way and that and sniffing his nose like a fox-hound when he is hunting a trail. "Mister Constable," he said, pretty soon, "what is it, Sir, that stinks so in this Court-room?" Marcellus hopped out of his chair and moved around as rapidly

as the crowded state of the room would permit, sniffing his nose, but finding nothing objectionable to report, returned to his proper place at Greenberry's side. "What is it?" said Greenberry. "I don't know, Yer Honor," answered the Constable, "unless some gentleman has drawn a boot."

Obe Crews rang out a merry peal of laughter that could be heard all over town.

"Bring that man before me," shouted Greenberry, angry and indignant beyond measure. Marcellus rushed at Obe to collar him but tripped over Doc Humes' long legs and fell head foremost against Sim Drake's stomach which doubled poor Sim up like a Jack-knife. Before the Constable could regain his feet Obe slipped out of the door and made for his tavern as fast as his short legs could carry him.

On another occasion when Miss Tripper swore out a warrant against Obe Crews' Jeff, the charge being that Jeff had committed malicious trespass in this, to wit; that on or about the 9th day of September in the year of our Lord 1846 the said Jeff being then and there a chattel belonging to Obadiah Crews did with malice prepense, in the precinct of Oldfields, County of C—and Commonwealth of Kentucky, cast a stone or other hard substance at and did grievously wound and injure the corpus of an animal namely, one cat, the property of Frances Tripper, against the peace and dignity of said Commonwealth, Marcellus arrested Jeff and brought him before the Justice. Tom Tuttle, as droll a dog as ever thumbed Blackstone, was retained by Obe to defend his negro. At the hour set for the trial Tom was on hand and when Greenberry read the warrant Tom put in a demurrer.

"I appear for the prisoner at the bar, if Your Honor please," said Tom, "and desire to lodge a demurrer to the warrant."

Greenberry, having no idea of what was meant by a demurrer, discreetly held his tongue and waited for the lawyer to explain himself.

"The grounds of my demurrer," said Tom, "are as follows"—holding a piece of paper in his hand and pretending to read from it.

"First, the warrant does not specifically state the locus in quo."

"It states a cat," replied the Court. "I hold that it is sufficient in this respect."

"Secondly," said Tom, "it fails to state in what part of its corpus the cat was wounded. It's elementary law Your Honor, that this is absolutely essential."

"The Constable informs me," said Greenberry, "that the animal of the prosecuting witness was hit in the head."

"That may be, Your Honor," replied Tom, "and if so this case will have to be dismissed on the merits, as Your Honor will take judicial cognizance that the head is not the Corpus."

"It's near enough to it to save the case," said Greenberry. "The objection is overruled."

"Thirdly," said Tom, "we are not advised from this warrant as to whether Miss Tripper's cat is a pussy-cat or a tom-cat. All the authorities hold that this is fatally defective. I cite Coke on Lyttleton, page 413."

Greenberry threw back his head and gazed at the ceiling. Evidently he considered the objection very

serious. It raised a "pint of law" of the gravest moment.

"What kind of cat is it, Mister Constable?" he enquired of Marcellus.

Marcellus whispered something to Miss Tripper.

"If Your Honor please," roared Tom, with great show of earnestness, "I object to an officer of this Court communicating sub rosa with the prosecuting witness. The Statutes expressly forbid it."

"Call Miss Tripper," said Greenberry, reluctant to have the case fall to the ground.

Marcellus cried out, "Miss Tripper, take the witness stand."

Little Miss Tripper, mincing and blushing, stepped forward.

"Is your cat"—began Greenberry.

"I object," said Tom. "The point I make, Your Honor, is that this warrant must state on its face what kind of cat it is. Your Honor is perfectly familiar with the rule of law which prohibits a written instrument from being contradicted, modified, varied, altered, or changed, by oral testimony. Miss Tripper's evidence can not be received in this point."

Greenberry was non-plussed. He saw no way to avoid the objection, and while he recognized the necessity of ruling according to law, he was fretted and angry beyond measure. But it was his duty to yield.

"Let the case be dismissed," said he. "This Court has every desire to punish refractions of the law, but it must be done *seriatim*, *verbatim*, and *ipso facto*. Mister Constable, the fatal defect in this warrant is your fault and ignorance. It was your duty to find

out before the Court issued it whether the dratted beast was a he-cat or a she-cat.

"The prisoner is surcharged from custody."

A day or two afterwards Tom was arguing a question of law before Judge Summers, who had already ruled upon it, and was endeavoring to persuade his Honor to change his mind.

Nothing was more impossible and nothing irritated the Judge to such a degree.

"Mr. Hurtle," said he, interrupting the lawyer in the middle of a sentence, "I desire you to bear in mind, Sir, that you are not in Justice Crupple's Court now."

"I do not understand the force of your Honor's remark," said Tom, innocent as a lamb.

"Mister Clerk, enter a fine against Counsel of five dollars, for contempt of Court. He will stand committed until the fine has been paid. Where's the Sheriff?"

When the Burlingame tragedy created some excitement in Oldfields, chiefly it's true, on account of the interest we took in Obe Crews, Squire Crupples was thrown into a state of uncertainty and, I may say, painful agitation which threatened to affect his reason, the trouble being that for the life of him he couldn't reach a conclusion as to whether it was his duty as an officer of the law to issue another writ of *inquiendo*.

"Certainly," he said to Marcellus, "an *E-vent* has happened and took place wherein and whereby three men has been killed and two men dangerously wounded, but the question is: Has this Court jurisprudence to issue the writ?"

"I see," remarked Sim Drake, who was standing near "it's a grave question, as the man said when he was about to be buried alive."

Greenberry and Marcellus stared at Sim, wondering what the man referred to by him had to do with the matter. Sim was in liquor, that was plain.

"You see," said Greenberry, "here appendeth the obscurity of the matter, as a pint of law. Dan Riply and his boys was on the Fayette side of the County line, while Obe Crews and Burlingame was on the C—— side when the shooting began. Now mark me! When the bullets outern the weppins of the aforesaid last named departed and separated therefrom they was on this side of the line and therefore within my jurisprudence, but the moment they crossed the line it appears to me that this Court have no right, as a pint of law, mind ye, to interfere."

"I would advise you not to git in the way," said Sim, to which remark Greenberry paid no attention.

"It appears to me," continued Greenberry, "that way, respectin' and concernin' *them* bullets; but now, there's the bullets that Dan Ripley and his boys surcharged from *their* weppings. *Them* bullets was surcharged from the other side of the line, beyant the jurisprudence of my Court. The question is, what right has this Court to interfere?"

"Stand aside," said Sim.

"Any way we look at the matter," concluded Greenberry, "I am of the opinion, as a pint of law, the writ cannot issue."

Dear me! If I was idling my time away writing fiction I would not dare to draw such a goose.

JIM TAIT

One of the Characters, as we say, in Oldfields, whose singularities mark him off, as it were, from the common herd, is Jim Tait, the Tanner. Jim is a brawny, big-boned man who works steadily at his trade, has a large family, is honest in his dealings, very willful and headstrong, goes about with his coat off, his shirt sleeves rolled up to the elbow and the bosom unbuttoned, and smells of green leather prodigiously. He is the hairiest man I ever saw in my life.

Often in my evening strolls I have stood at the open door of his tannery watching Jim at work dressing hides, and at such times the thought possessed me that if his own hide had to be tanned 'twould be as hard a task as any tanner ever undertook.

He was born and raised somewhere in the Cumberland Mountains above the Mud Lick Springs, and like most mountain men he thinks himself the equal of anybody and a little better than most people. A prouder spirited, more self-sufficient creature than Jim 'twould be hard to find. He looks up to no man and he expects no man to look up to him. His children resemble him in this respect, as well as physically as to which latter they look like cub-bears, so hairy and all but naked they are. One of his boys tumbled head over heels into a vat not long ago and Doc Humes says he is shedding off, but with this exception it is difficult to tell whether his brats are white or black. He loves to hear himself talk and

can spin yarns by the hour about his adventures in the mountains when he was a boy.

Obe Crews tells this tale on Jim: He says Jim was entertaining some friends at his shop one day with a stiff yarn about a *painter*, as he called it, which got after him up on the head waters of Lulbe-grud. He said he was making a still hunt for a deer when he heard a scream off on one side which sounded just like a woman in a terrible fright. He ran through the brush in the direction the scream came from and happening to look up into a big chestnut tree there was a painter stretched out on a limb glaring down at him with flaming eyes and slowly whipping his tail from side to side just like a cat when it is about to spring on a bird. Jim said he raised his rifle and fired, "but," says he, "I never knew whether I killed the critter or missed him. I got him though."

"Why," asked one of his listeners, "how was that?"

"'Twas just this way," replied Jim. "At the crack of my wepping, or it must have been a little before, the painter sprung at me, mouth open and with a scream that lifted the hair on my head and made goose-flesh of my skin. I barely had time to steady myself to meet him, at a charge baynit position, you understand, when he riched me, but mark you, gentlemen, he had lit plumb square on the pint of my wepping, me a holdin' her stiff and steady as a pine tree, you see, and the first thing I knew his hot jaws was scrapin' agin my left hand. I held her so, mind you, and the end of my wepping was a stickin' out behind him. There he was just like you'd skewer a rasher of bacon for to brile on the coals, and dead as a mack-

erel,—but I don't know to this day and therefore I can't say whether I permeated him as it were, or whether I missed him clear as a whistle and he killed himself."

Jim's oldest boy, not much higher than your knee, had listened to his father's story and at its conclusion he said:

"Now Pap, you know that's a lie."

"Your Pap is a tellin' Scripture truth, my son," said Jim, not the least bit ruffled at the boy's incredulity nor the way he expressed it. "And what's more, I sold the skin of that painter to a mooseum in Philadelphia, which stuffed it, and put glass eyes in the head, and there it stands to this day, the biggest painter that was ever saw. I disremember what I got for it edzactly—'pears to me 'twas a hundred dollars; it might have been more and it might have been not so much."

When Ad White was arrested and brought before Greenberry Crupples, charged with stealing Sim Drake's cow, Jim Tait was a witness for the Commonwealth. Tom Tuttle appeared for the prisoner.

Sim Drake testified that when his cow "come up a missin'" he naturally suspicioned that somebody had "lifted" her and sold the meat to the butcher, "for the critter was fat as butter," said Sim, "and it 'peared to me that the roast we had for dinner tasted familiar, as you may say. And so, knowin' that the thief would be a sellin' the hide to Jim Tait, I went down to the tannery to look around a bit, and there, sure enough, was a fresh hide just about the size of my old Sookey a layin' on the floor. Jim told me——"

"Stop there," shouted Tom Tuttle, "Your Honor, I object to this witness telling what Jim Tait said to him."

"How is this Court to know what he said," remarked Greenberry in a severe tone, "unless the witness tells it?"

Marcellus Scraggs, Greenberry's Constable and fac-totum, whispered something in Greenberry's ear. "However," said Crupples, "if you persist upon it I'll sustain the objection. Jim Tait is present in Court and can tell what he said."

"But," said Tom, "that will be equally objectionable. Conversation between Sim Drake and Jim Tait in the absence of the prisoner at the bar is not competent evidence against him. All the authorities _____"

"Tom Tuttle," roared Greenberry, now highly indignant, "if you make a pint of law in this Court that is a pint of law, the Court will hear you, but when you say that neither Sim Drake and Jim Tait can testify what one said to the other because the prisoner was not there at the time you are triflin' with justice. How is the Court to know unless one or tother of 'em tells it? Of course the prisoner was not there, for Marcellus Scraggs arrested him mejiately afterwards in the bar-room of Kelly's tavern—and dead drunk at that."

"If Your Honor please," began Tom, rising to address the Court.

"Sit down, Sir!" shouted Greenberry. "This case will now proceed, *seriatim*, *et literatim*, and *locus in quo*. Call another witness."

Jim Tait now took the stand and testified that Ad White brought a hide to his tannery that morning and sold it to him.

"What sort of hide was it?" questioned Greenberry.

"It were a beef's hide," said Jim.

"Do you desire to examine the witness, Mr. Tuttle?" queried the Court.

"I do, Your Honor," said Tom.

"You say it was a beef's hide?" Tom asked Jim.

"I do Sir," said Jim.

"You did not say it was a cow's hide?" enquired Tom.

"I did not, Sir," said Jim.

"I move to dismiss the case," said Tom. "Sim Drake's animal was a cow. There is not one scintilla of evidence here that the hide in Jim Tait's tannery is a cow's hide."

"Not so fast, Mr. Tuttle," said Greenberry, "not so fast, Sir. This case is not over yet. Is that hide a cow's hide, Jim Tait?"

"It is not, Sir," answered Jim, "it's a steer's hide."

"Mister White," said Greenberry, turning to the prisoner and very much abashed, "a great mistake has been made by an officer of this Court. The charge against you must be dismissed. You are a innocent man, Sir."

"I knowd it all the time," said Ad.

THE SLAVE BLOCK

It would seem strange, I opine, if nothing were said in these Chronicles on the subject of slavery, or at least respecting some incidents connected with that institution. As to the matter of slavery itself, in its moral and political aspects, sometimes I am of one mind and sometimes of another. I am a Kentuckian to the backbone, as we say, and I think that whatever opinion the Yankees or anybody else may have as to the right or the wrong of slavery, we people of the South must and will settle that question for ourselves. Slaves are property, and they have no more right to say we shall not own them than to say we shall not own land or cattle.

But all the same, I see and hear things sometimes concerning the negroes and the way in which some masters treat them, or in which the ups and downs of fortune necessarily affect them, that make me sad. Then, again, when I consider the character of the negro, his thriftlessness, his incapacity, and the outcome of experiments which have been made in giving him freedom, I am strongly impressed with the belief that, taking matters by and large, it is better for him to be in slavery.

However, my only purpose is to describe some of the things I have witnessed at public sales of negroes on the slave block here in Oldfields, preserving them, as it were, in these Chronicles, as a poor fly caught in amber is preserved, so that, peradventure, long after I have gone to my reward, and possibly long

after the institution of slavery itself has ceased to be, what I put down on paper may be perused by future generations, not being conceited as to the value of it, but not doubting that some time or other it will see the light of day.

The incidents I am to relate, by way of illustration, respect the serious and sorrowful features of these public sales, as well as the humorous side of them, thus fortifying a position I have heretofore referred to that comedy and tragedy tread on one another's heels in this world.

Directly opposite the Court House on Main Street is a large stile block that was put there for the convenience of women, alighting from or mounting their saddle-horses, but that is also used, because of its public location, as a block or platform on which negroes are stood when they are offered for sale to the highest bidder. Here, on one county court day, I saw a likely young negro man put up for sale. His master had died, and in settling up his estate it became necessary to sell the property, including all the slaves. Immediately preceding the sale of this boy his mother had been sold, the purchaser being a daughter of the decedent, whose old "mammy" the woman had been, and who was greatly attached to her. But in buying the mother the lady had expended the only money she possessed, and when the boy was offered she was not able to bid on him, notwithstanding the all but heart-breaking appeals of the old negress, who saw several professional negro buyers standing around ready and eager to purchase, and who, as the poor woman knew quite well, bought for the New Orleans market.

The auction began and the bids were lively from the start. Those hard-faced "negro traders," as we call them, contended with one another in the offers, first one and then another bidding on the boy, and at last they ran him up to twelve hundred dollars. Then some one behind me in the crowd bid twelve hundred and fifty. I turned and saw, somewhat to my surprise, that it was Obe Crews, for I supposed Obe already had all the servants he needed at his tavern. The negro traders quit bidding and the boy was knocked down to him.

That night he told me how he came to attend the sale and make the bid. He said that for years he had bought butter and eggs from the old mother, who marketed them from her master's little farm in the country, and that she was such a kindly, good old negro he couldn't resist her appeal to him to save her boy when she hurried down to his tavern and told him her troubles. He also said that the Squire was present when she came and heard what she said and immediately became interested.

"Go, Obe," said he, "and buy him in. If you need any money let me know."

"'Spose," replied Obe, "them d—n nigger traders run him up on me out of all reason?"

"You buy him," said the Squire, "if you have to pay more for him than you think he's worth. I'll take him off your hands."

The sequel to the matter was that the young mistress got the boy, and got her own time in which to pay for him.

On another occasion Anderson's George was put up on the block to be sold.

After George was convicted and punished for stealing Dinah's pig, his brethren and sisters in the church objected to his spiritual ministrations and refused to hear him preach and pray. Not that, if the truth were known, many of them were more mindful of the laws of *meum* and *tuum* than George, but they had a sort of pride in the matter and feared the ridicule their church would be subjected to. The consequence was that George fell further and further from grace, and got to be such a rogue that he was a nuisance to the community. More than once he had been caught in his rascality and had renewed his acquaintance with Dave Holdem's cowhide, receiving at the same time Dave's pious admonitions. Finally his master determined to put him up on the block and sell him. George knew that he had no chance to find a home in the county, because no one cared to buy him, and that the "nigger traders" would get him and send him South—a fate he mortally feared—and, as will be seen, he put his wits to work to prevent it. When he looked around him, as he stood on the block, he saw several of those cold-blooded creatures in the crowd,—the negroes knew them perfectly well, just as the people in the old days in London knew the public executioner, and in the same way they shrink whenever they see one.

The auctioneer announced that George was for sale to the highest bidder, told his age, and said that Mr. Anderson would give a bill of sale with the usual guarantee as to health.

The professional buyers of human flesh began to bid, and soon there was a lively contest between them. But suddenly George assumed a strange appearance.

His head was thrown back, his eyes rolled wildly, and his body and limbs began to twitch and jerk in a remarkable manner.

"What's the matter with your boy, Mr. Anderson?" asked one of the bidders.

Anderson was himself astonished and puzzled and drew nearer the block.

He did not answer the question.

George was now foaming at the mouth, and the twitching and jerking increased in violence.

"What's the matter with you, boy?" said the trader to George.

"O, I has fits, I has," exclaimed George, whereupon his body doubled up and rolled off the block.

Of course, that ended the auction. George was carted off to jail and Doc Humes was sent for. A careful examination left Doc in doubt as to his actual condition, and he advised Anderson to leave him in Dave Holdem's custody for awhile, promising to look in on him again the next morning.

Under his master's instructions, George was put to bed in the debtor's room, where he soon sank, apparently, into a sound sleep.

The next morning when Dave took him something to eat the bed was empty; George was gone, and nothing was heard of him again until word came, several weeks after, that he was safe in Canada.

A MUSTER DAY OF THE CORN-STALK MILITIA

The Fourth of July is a great day in Oldfields, election days are great days, and nowhere are the Christmas holidays observed and enjoyed more heartily; but the greatest day of all is Muster day, when the sturdy yeomenry of the county is drawn up in serried ranks, and in all the pomp and ceremonies of war are exhibited to the delighted people.

Muster day is held in the month of September, by which time the harvest is over and done, the most of the crops are laid by, and the farmers have a resting spell from arduous labor; the very negroes getting a holiday and a frolic before hemp cutting time rolls around.

The field of Mars is always some big bluegrass pasture near town, the particular spot being made a matter of public knowledge several weeks before hand. When the sun rises on the appointed day the people of the county, town and country, male and female, adults and children, white and black, flock in from every direction, by every road and by-path, afoot, horseback, and in wagons, buggies, and carriages of every kind and quality, from the rude farm wagon with timothy hay liberally packed into the bed as a substitute for springs, to the great-bellied family carriages like Doc Humes' and Judge Summers', the body of which is perked up so high from the ground that little adjustable stair-steps, so to speak, must be let down from the side door for the insiders to descend to terra firma.

I consider it my duty and the duty of every good citizen to attend these musters, and I always do. Our presence encourages and stimulates the officers and men in the performance of the labors of the day, the proper discharge of which furnishes the Commonwealth with a body of trained citizens ready at any moment to fly to arms either to repel a foreign foe or to suppress internal riot and disorder. And not only as a matter of civic duty, but also as a great pleasure, I go to the field on Muster day, for I dearly love to meet and mingle with my fellow citizens, and I must confess that I always see something in the events of the day of a droll character, which particularly delights me. I have not that cynical and carping disposition which finds food for itself in the frailties of men, nor error in their follies. I do not like that sort of man. He reminds me of our dogs which, when meeting, bristle up and snarl or go smelling and sniffing. But, as I say, I do find infinite amusement in the idiosyncracies and harmless peculiarities of my fellow men—little drolleries and absurdities of which they are wholly unconscious, and the innocent disclosure of which tickles me to the marrow bone, as it were. Most men have these, and I dare say I possess my share; but if I do, I grudge not the fun my friends derive from them.

But to resume. 'Twas only last September that I enjoyed one of our Muster days more abundantly than I ever did before in all my life.

The day itself was perfect—one of those hazy Indian Summer days when nature is mellow and ripe and the good God would seem to exert Himself to

show His children how beautiful is the world He has made.

The militia companies were out in full force, the rank and file armed with tall, glistening corn-stalks for muskets, and as varied in costume and in height as the homely flowers in a kitchen garden, the captains, with swords drawn and scabbards dangling this way and that, sometimes at the side where they belonged and sometimes tangled between their legs, and the general and his staff, with cocked hats all a-plume, golden epaulettes, brass buttons and great loops of orange-colored cords across their martial breasts,—these warriors mounted, of course, on prancing steeds, which champed their bridle bits and seemed to snuff the battle afar. I must only give space here to a more particular mention of the officer of the day, General Themistocles Trumper, a militia man of great renown in these parts. Themistocles Trumper was born and raised on a little farm situate on the waters of Four-Mile Creek. His father was a soldier in the war of 1812, and stood behind the cotton bales with Andrew Jackson when that old hero repulsed the British army at New Orleans. His mother was a cousin three times removed of a lineal descendant of Daniel Boone. And when the Mexican war broke out, Themistocles, the tenth child of this honorable parentage, was first sergeant in Roger Hanson's company and fought under old Zac Taylor at the battle of Buena Vista, where he received a wound like my Uncle Toby, in the groin, and was carried off the field. History does not relate whether he was nursed back to health by a handsome widow; but however that may be, he did survive his hurt and,

being honorably discharged, returned to Kentucky to receive from his gratified country and his proud kinsfolk and neighbors that welcome he had so fully earned. With martial ardor unappeased, Themistocles formed a militia company, and by reason of the great zeal he manifested on Muster days, and of his repute as a warrior who had won his spurs, as we say, on the cactus-bristling fields of Mexico, he gradually advanced along the line of promotion until now he was Colonel and Brevet-General commanding the forces of the county.

Ah! a sight for gods and men was General Trumper on that Muster day! Astride his war steed, a large, raw-boned roan with pointed ears and blazing eyes, but somewhat marred as to his hind parts by the fact that the calves had chewed off most of his tail, the General occupied, with his staff, a small knoll near the center of the pasture, from which coign of vantage his vision swept the field. Off to his right was the artillery—a little Mexican cannon, a trophy of our glorious war with the Greasers—and at irregular intervals there was a discharge of blank cartridges from this piece, which filled all the air with sound and caused the hearts of the militia men to beat with pride. Straight in front these latter stood, their corn-stalk guns at shoulder-arms, their captains with drawn swords, and a look of battle on every face, while the deep bum-bum of the bass drum, the rat-tat-tat of the kettle drum, and the shrill notes of the fife playing "The Girl I Left Behind Me"—all made up a glorious combination of sights and sounds rarely equalled and perhaps never surpassed in this world.

General Trumper being complimented by Obe

Crews on the handsome steed he bestrode, gently patted the noble animal's curved neck and said:

"Yes, Major" (Obe is chief of staff with the rank of Major, and, mounted on Blue John, looked prodigiously fine that day) "Yes, Major," said General Trumper, "he is a foal of my old mare Molly, and sired by Bill Jackson's Starlight. I call him Bucephalus, after the favorite steed of Alexander the Great."

"He is certainly a unique animal," said Obe, glancing at Bucephalus' tail.

"D—n the bit of it," replied the General, with some heat.

A droll incident which occurred toward the shank of the evening after the muster was over must be noted, as it gives me the chance to embalm in these Chronicles an Oldfields citizen I have not as yet made mention of. I refer to Josiah Baxter, a fiery little snip of a man who sits cross-legged the most of his time on Sim Drake's tailor bench plying his needle on coats and waistcoats and other male garments; but who all the same, is not deficient in martial ardor, and up to the Muster day I am writing about was second officer in his company. A few weeks before the captain of this company had gone to his reward, and on Muster day Josiah was promoted for gallantry on the field, he having headed a corn-stalk bay'net charge against the enemy with prodigious heroism, and so he was appointed captain of his company.

Whereupon, the maneuvers of the day having come to a glorious end, Josiah marched his company back to town and filled every mother's son of 'em, himself included, with the oldest whiskey Obe Crews had behind his bar. 'Twas a roystering, noisy crowd before

his men dispersed, and Josiah, somewhat unnerved, so to speak, in his knee joints, made his way home.

His good wife, a flighty sort of woman, but affectionate and docile withal, had heard of the new honors which had come to her lord, and was at the door expectant and eager for his return. Josiah reached his front yard gate, the latch of which seemed to him to have been transferred to the hinge side, and after fumbling and damning the thing a moment, managed to get it open. Staggering up the brick walk which led to the house, his wife accosted him in a joyous tone of voice:

"Oh, Captain Baxter, Captain Baxter! You are 'Captain' now, dear, and what am I?"

"Madam," replied Josiah, "you are—hic—the same—hic—damn fool you always were."

A SYMPOSIUM IN DOC HUMES' DEN

Out among the great oaks and walnuts that

"Spread an Army shade"

As Burns would say, in Doc Humes' yard, he has a small, two-roomed brick house which he calls his "Den." The front room is really his office, in which he receives those patients who are able to come to him to get advice or medicine, and here, on a small shelf, he keeps the few medical books he has, his surgical instruments and his mortar and pestle. In one cor-

ner stands the skeleton of the Negro Tom who was hung for murdering his master. In half a dozen drawers under the window are drugs, phials, and pill boxes. The room smells of sulphur, assofoetida and rhubarb—

“A rank compound of villainous smells,” to quote from the divine William.

The Negro’s bones are strung together cunningly with brass wire, and in the right hand is the iron crow-bar with which he crushed his old master’s skull.

Passing through this room, which, for one, I always did without lingering, for it gave me the shivers, we come to the much larger back room, which is as cheerful and cozy as possible, and which is Doc’s Den. Capacious, Russia-leather arm-chairs invite you to repose, the walls are lined with bookshelves, a thick, soft carpet covers the floor, a ponderous cherry-wood table occupies the center, and opposite the door is a huge fire-place, which on the occasion I am to tell of contained a sparkling, flaming fire of shell-bark hickory. On the coals was a copper tea-kettle from the spout of which issued a pleasant-noised steam. On the table was a bowl of white, lump sugar, glasses, silver mugs, tea-spoons, lemons, a small bottle of rum, another of Scotch Whiskey, and a prodigious, fat-bellied decanter through whose glistening sides the amber-colored juice of the corn looked benign, as it were, and generous. A box of Havanas, open and slightly tilted, so that the beautiful, delicious smelling cigars tumbled out profusely completed that lay out. To one side was another table on which was a baked ham, an English cheese, a jar of white walnut pickles, and a plate of bread.

I'll declare! When I entered the "Den" and cast my eyes around, a glow of happiness permeated me. Imagine the first glance A Christian Soul (St. Peter having kindly put the gates ajar) gets of the golden streets of the New Jerusalem! That's in the other world, the world of Spirits, as to the pleasures of which, compared with the choicest delights of this sublunary sphere, I confess I am of Charles Lamb's opinion.

From Reverend Spooner's stand-point I suppose such a view of the matter smacks strongly of the lusts of the flesh, the world and the devil. All the same, whether "Elia" is right or wrong, certainly I could not gaze upon what was before me, including of course, the pleasant faces of my friends (for the Squire and Obe Crews were sitting on either side of Doc when I came in) and wish for anything better in this world or the next. One poet hath it that friendship is

"A star

Which moves not with the moving heavens alone,
A smile among dark frowns—a gentle tone
Among rude voices, a beloved light,
A solitude, a refuge, a delight."

And that generous spread of eatables and drinkables, the cosy chairs, the glowing fire, the singing tea-kettle, shall we say that even to so fine a thing as friendship and pleasant discourse these are not worthy accessories? Say *humble* accessories. Very well. But *worthy*? Yes, surely. They make the gathering together of friends spherical and complete, as it were. They leave nothing wanting. They warm

the heart and make nimble the wit that sits lurking in the brain, potent to come when duly called. We cannot paint the lily, but we can set it in an oriental vase marvelous for its handiwork and beauty and thereby multiply its loveliness.

"Ah, Dominie," spoke up Doc with that deep-toned resonant voice which made the glasses jingle on the table, "here you are. The Squire and Obe arrived full ten minutes ago, and we haven't had a toddy yet. I feel the dust settling in my throat."

"Dominie," said the Squire, "we are all of a mind that you can brew the best punch, and make the finest whiskey-toddy in the world, and I move, Gentlemen, that as time is winging us away and life is but a winter's day, Dominie proceed at once to brew the punch, first making us, though, a glass of toddy to engage our minds in the meanwhile."

"The motion is carried," said Doc. "Obe Crews objects, but we vote him down."

"I object!" exclaimed Obe, essaying to join his fat hands over his rounded belly, failing in which he rubbed that part of his anatomy with gentle strokes up and down as if he was congratulating it in what was coming or as if he was tempering it as we do our glasses before filling them with hot punch. "May I never spit white again, if I do."

"There he goes," said the Squire. "I am firmly convinced that Obe Crews knows Shakespeare only as the creator of Jack Falstaff. Imagine him one of Dominie's pupils under examination. All the fond mothers and proud fathers are present and the Master is putting his boys and girls through their best paces.

"Dominie bows to the audience and says: 'Ladies

and Gentlemen, I have one scholar who makes no progress in such homely things as the three R's, but I venture to say that when it comes to belles-lettres he is not excelled by any one—at least, the greatest poet in our language must be on his finger ends, *as it were.*'” Here the Squire winked at Doc, and I could see that he was poking fun at me, also, for he used a phrase that is one of my favourites, I believe. “I propose,” said the Squire, continuing to speak in my person, “to propound him a few interrogations touching and concerning the writings of the divine William. ‘Obadiah Crews!’ Obe leaves his bench and comes to the rostrum, blushing and timid, and wishing to God he had never heard of Shakespeare.

“‘Obadiah,’ says the Dominie, ‘you will favour the audience with information as to who was William Shakespeare. Speak up, Sir.’

“‘He was a fellow what wrote a story called the Merry Wives of Windsor,’ responds Obe, twisting the fingers of his two hands in and out, as if he was unweaving a piece of cloth, and standing with the big-toe of his left foot at right angles to the other.

“‘What else did he write?’ asks the Dominie.

“‘Another story called Henry the Fourth,’ answered Obe.

“‘Anything else?’ queried the Master.

“‘Not that I knows on,’ says Obe.

“‘Why Obadiah, what about Hamlet, and King Lear, and The Tempest?’ enquired the Dominie.

“Obe is silent.

“‘Well, Sir, tell us something about the Merry Wives of Windsor,’ says the Dominie. ‘Who are the Characters in the play?’

" 'Jack Falstaff,' answers Obe.

"Dom. 'Yes, who else?'

"Obe. 'I disremember.'

"Dom. 'Well, Henry the Fourth. What characters are in that play?'

"Obe. 'Jack Falstaff.'

"Dom. 'What others?'

"Obe. 'I disremember.'

"Dom. Why Obadiah, this is shameful, sir. What sort of man is Jack Falstaff? Maybe you can tell us that.'

"Obe. 'He was a big-bellied man, like your old Dinah, cept that Dinah is a woman, and a nigger.'

"(A roar in the audience.)

"Dom. 'Go to your seat, Sirrah. You and I will transact some business when school is dismissed.' "

Dear me! I never saw the Squire in finer feather! The while he was going on so I mashed the sugar lumps in the glasses, dissolving them thoroughly, and pouring into each glass the proper quantity of whiskey. We waited until the royal liquor had married, as it were, the plebian syrup, before we essayed the pleasant task of drinking it.

Obe Crews, holding up his glass between himself and the lamp-light and noting with a smile on his droll face how the oily curves and twists of the whiskey looked like little serpents, spoke up and said:

"Squire, if I was as big a ninny as that, one thing is certain, I would not be here tonight in such company. But, indeed, I do admire old Jack Falstaff prodigiously. He is as full of wit as he is of sac. He is so human; he's such an unvarnished old guzzler, cheat and boaster. If we had him here in Oldfields

I'd give him the best room in my tavern and supply him free of charge with all the whiskey he could drink."

I venture to remark that it was because of the integrity, so to speak, of his character, that is, its daylight openness and its perfect fitness with his times and his surroundings, that we all liked him. Eastcheap, Poyns, Doll Tear-sheet, Dame Quickly, the old London of that day,—how natural they should have a Falstaff with his great belly, his side-arms, his swagger, his insatiable thirst!

"If Sim Drake," said Doc, "had Falstaff's capacity,—his tierce-age, so to speak, Dominie,—'twould make him infinitely happy. Sim has a smart tooth for whiskey, and let him get ever so drunk overnight he always comes up smiling in the morning—no bad stomach, nor headache. The trouble with Sim, however, is, that it takes so little to disable him. He frankly admits it, and says with charming *naivete* that it's the only fly in his ointment. 'Just when I begin,' says Sim, 'to feel rich all over, to love everybody, and to believe that I have the finest voice for song, a sort of d——n, thick curtain falls down over my senses, and oblivion claims me for her own.'"

"Speaking of oblivion, gentlemen," said the Squire, "reminds me: the other night I was reading an article in the last Edinburgh Review on the immortality of the Soul. I have been thinking the matter over again, for the thousandth time in my life, and I want to know what you all think of it (I think I know the Dominie's opinion—he holds fast to the teachings of the church); but Doc, how is it with you? and you, Obe, what have you to say about it?"

Doc shifted his cud, and, gazing steadily into the burning logs, was silent. Obe Crews suggested that if we were going to consider a matter of such weight the punch bowl should first be filled "as a starter." I turned my attention to the matter without delay and in the meanwhile Obe took a dram of plain whiskey. He said 'twas the only solid and safe foundation when punch was to be the superstructure. It loosened his tongue and he spoke up:

"Squire; I've heard you say that the philosophers of ancient and modern days hold that the future life and the existence of a soul can't be reasoned out, and all that we can know is that we know nothing. However that may be, let me tell you this: When I was a mere snip of a lad I sat one winter's night by the bedside of my dying mother. Pap had gone before her, and she was all I had left in the world, and now she was about to go and leave me alone. I was bending over her and her poor thin hands clasped my tear-stained face between them, while her eyes, unnaturally bright, looked into mine with a yearning and a love—Ah, my friends, excuse me. Give me a glass of that punch Dominie. Her last words in this world were these,—I can never forget them: 'Oh, my son,' said she, 'Mother must go, and leave you behind. This is a wicked and a cold world, and hardship and temptation await you. But remember that there is a God above us; that there is a place eternal in the heavens, not made with hands; that Christ died to save us from our sins, and that if you love and serve him as you should you will go to heaven when you die,—and I pray the good God that there you will find again your father and your mother.'

"Gentlemen, excuse me. Dominie: a jigger or two more of whiskey will improve your punch. Ah, that's better.

"Gentlemen, all the philosophers that ever chawed words and writ books may go to hell, for me. *I* believe what my dear Mother told 'me."

'Pon my word, I was never so affected in my life! It required two glasses of punch, one right after the other, to mollify and soothe the turbulency of my emotions, so to speak.

Doc Humes now spoke up:

"Squire," said he, "I've thought on this subject, off and on, for many years—and I believe I've read a good part of what has been written, *pro* and *con*. The bent of my mind is that the life we live here is the only one. Fill my glass, Dominie, if you please. A plant or an animal is produced from a seed; it matures and, itself, throws off seeds, or it does not, as the case may be. If it does *not*, it dies in due time, and that ends the chapter. If it *does*, it dies in due time, and that ends the chapter, all the same, so far as it is concerned; but other plants or animals succeed it, to leave issue or not, and to die in their turn. 'Twas always so; 'twill always be so. An infinite past lies behind us, and an infinite future is before. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth but no man knoweth whence it cometh nor whither it goeth.' We do not know and we cannot know—Obe, hand me one of those cigars." He lit the cigar, drew on it until it all but blazed, and then puffed a cloud of smoke toward the ceiling.

"What's your own notion, Squire," he asked, turning his bulky frame in the chair until he faced Squire

Buckley. "Did the article in the Review help you any?"

"No," replied the Squire, "I get no light from such writings. They are nothing more than tallow dips that show us the blackness of the night. Gentlemen, here are four grey-haired old men whose lives are drawing to a close. The Dominie and Obe Crews believe in the Bible and do not bother their heads with doubts. Doc has no doubts and does not bother his head with the Bible. I believe that sizes you up correctly. Perhaps unfortunately I have nothing but doubts. In the first place I doubt if the human mind can ever rest content without some sort of religion; I doubt if the abstract notion of A Great First Cause will answer the purpose of a religion; and I doubt whether the existing belief in a personal God, the divinity of Christ and what theologians call the Scheme of Redemption is susceptible of proof or even of reasonable support outside of Scriptural revelation. All the same, if a minister of the Gospel asked my advice I would tell him to let Metaphysics and Natural Religion alone and take his stand on Revelation. If the belief of the world in the truth of the Bible, in a God who created and who cares for all things, in a Christ who died for the sins of the world,—if this faith of our fathers cannot be maintained, I, for one, am unable to conceive what can take its place, and satisfy men's minds. It is certain, I think, that there will be no retrogression to a cruder belief. And I doubt if it is possible to advance. There is a God or there is not. There is life hereafter or there is not. Whether faith is essential to Salvation in another world it seems to me that it is essential to Salvation

in this world. Men must be permitted to feel that there is something to strive for. They must be permitted to hope that there is another and a better life, --another and a better world than this, where those whom death has separated may be united again. If the current belief is to fade away something better must be offered in its place. Considering the desires of the human heart, considering the limitations of the human intellect, considering the essential laws of thought, I doubt if this will ever be possible."

I ventured to observe that the heavenly city and a tuneful harp are good enough for me, and that it seemed as natural to believe in the Bible as to breathe; that my dear old father lived and died in the confident assurance that from Genesis to Revelation 'twas the word of God, and therefore the absolute truth. No shadow of doubt ever crossed his mind. And in all the long years of my life I never knew a better man. So ended the serious talk of the evening,—after which we sat until the "wee sma' hours," as the poet hath it, and were finally trundled off home in Doc's family carriage—a capacious and comfortable vehicle, the only objection to which is its height from the ground and the pesky, narrow, shaky steps we had to climb to get into it. 'Pon my word, the sole assurance I have to this day that I left the Den that night is the indubitable fact that I found myself in my own bed the next morning! But I had no headache and my appetite for breakfast was keen and natural—the surest test that our liquor was pure and good.

A POSSUM SUPPER AT SQUIRE BUCKLEY'S

Know ye the land where the Cypress and Myrtle are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime? It matters not; but

Know ye the land where the peerless opossum fattens on berries and paw-paws in the sweet Autumn time? That's the question.

It may sound very droll at first, but I have a notion that the character of a people, if not the fate of a country can be told from the kind of dish they consider the most toothsome of eatables. The argument runs in this wise: No matter what may be said in laudation of poetry, and music and painting and architecture, as to one of which the divine William says that he that hath not music in his soul is fit for treason, stratagems and spoils, the acme, the finest flavor, so to speak, of Civilization is the culinary art, and the perfection of that art in any given country must be determined from the nature and kind of viand that is held in the highest esteem. To illustrate; the Romans made a great to-do over a dish of peacocks' brains. The decline and fall of the Roman Empire, was consequently, a matter of course. Gibbon overlooked this. The Chinese took to Sharks' fins and the nests of a certain cliff swallow that those birds built and stuck together with their own "mewing and puking." What was the inevitable consequence? Chinese civilization crystallized and hardened thousands of years ago and progress became impossible. The Esquimaux feast on whale blubber and the frozen

entrails of the reindeer. What incentive to improvement is possible to such a people? The North American Indian dances in wild frenzy around a pot of boiled dog. He is rapidly disappearing from the face of the earth.

But come now to Kentucky: The very king of dishes to your true Kentuckian is roast possum and sweet potatoes—sweet potatoes full of sugar, and possums that get rolling fat on mulberries and paw-paw. Mulberries and pawpaws! Think of their delicious juices permeating as it were, an animal from the end of his nose to the extremest point of his long flexible tail! Then roast those potatoes in the ashes of a hickory wood fire, cook that possum before the live coals of the same fire, skillfully turning him and all the while basting him carefully with butter until he is of a beautiful brown, and serve them up together. Ah, it makes my mouth water, as the saying is, to think of it!

The sweet steam steals up my nostrils. The delicate fat melts in my mouth. A goblet of old port washes it down and stimulates the palate to cry for more. Talk about Potomac Shad, diamond-back terrapin, or Canvas-back duck! All good, I grant you, but la!

Now Kentuckians are the bravest, the handsomest, the finest hearted men in the world. Hot tempered? Yes, because naturally there are large quantities of caloric in our sourmash whiskey. Apt to go to extremes in personal quarrels, and shoot one another on trifling grounds, but of course we do not claim to be perfect, not at all. We only say that we are a finer breed of men than any other country can produce.

Nothing conceited in that. And I say that our favorite dish, possum and sweet potatoes, accounts for it. The women?—The very night of this possum supper at his house here is what the Squire said—an old bachelor but always a great admirer of the fair sex :

“Take ’em by and large,” said he, “the women of Kentucky are splendid. They are modest; they are as chaste as Diana, and as to beauty, go to any country gathering in this blue-grass country, to a country church, to a cross-roads meeting, to a barbecue,—to anything, and peep under the sunbonnet of the first girl you come to, and the chances are a thousand to one you’ll see a sweet face, a red lip, a melting eye, a gentle, charming expression. Around these women of ours there is an atmosphere, as it were, Dominie, of purity and sacredness that is not excelled any where on the face of the globe. Do you ever hear of a girl going wrong? Do you ever hear of a divorce suit?”

“No,” spoke up Obe Crews, “you do not. All you say about the women is true; but there is this to say also, that a man in Kentucky who sets out to seduce a girl, or to run after another man’s wife, takes his life in his hands, and he is apt to wake up some fine day to find the top of his head blown off.”

“Yes,” chimed in Doc Humes, “you remember, Dominie, the old Greek story about the Hesperides who were directed to watch the trees in Juno’s garden on which the golden apples grew. Sometimes they plucked off the apples themselves. So Mrs. Jupiter sent a large serpent to guard the fruit.”

“It appears to have been necessary,” I said.

“Dominie,” exclaimed the Squire, “you are incorrigible. If in one of your country strolls you should

get a glimpse of Diana you'd turn tail and run like a deer. She would need neither to set her dogs on you nor to transfix you with an arrow from her bow."

"Peradventure you are right, Squire," I replied. "There was a time once in my life when I didn't run, and I have regretted it ever since."

Well, well, I see I have drifted far away from that possum supper; I will resume.

The Squire's old cook, Silvy, having, as she said, a misery in her back, my Dinah waddled out to take her place in the kitchen that night. A thing not to be regretted, however much we felt sorry for Silvy. Talk about your French chefs! Is it a thing to brag on that a cook can serve up a lot of nasty frog-legs and toadstools, and slimy snails in such fashion that decent people can actually sit down and eat 'em? Go hence! I opine that any ordinary sort of a sculptor can pat and thumb a lump of common clay into the likeness of a woman, but when a block of Parian mable, white and pure as new fallen snow, is the material to be worked upon it requires the genius of a Praxitiles!

Her supper was to be served at nine o'clock and we (of course I mean Doc Humes, Obe Crews, and your humble servant) were asked to be on hand by six, so that we had three solid hours to discuss whiskey and whiskey toddies and get in fine fettle for the meal. Now the Squire has the remnant of a barrel of old Crow that has dozed and mellowed in his garret so long that—'pon my word! it seems almost sacrilegious to contaminate it with water, and I remember well, for this was in the first part of the evening—that after taking several straight drams I was most reluctant to

respond to the request to make up the toddies. They insisted I should, however, Doc Humes remarking that a toddy was lengthened sweetness long drawn out, and that too much straight whiskey has a proclivity, or as Jack Falstaff would say, an alacrity to fly to the brain—in other words that we'd all get drunk before supper time; and so I made the toddies, in the brewing of which I defy all creation to beat me. The excellence of possum and sweet potatoes, and the qualities of Kentucky men and women were discussed as I have intimated, the while we lowered the whiskey in the barrel, and the time before supper slipped away most pleasantly. Then came old grey-headed Nelson from the dining-room, throwing wide the door, and bowing with a courtly grace, announced the meal. Even while he did so the delicious odor of the possum floated through to where I sat, and stealing gently up my nostrils, told me like a gracious messenger, of the great treat in store.

Ah, how I wish it was in the power of language to adequately describe that supper,—the exquisite flavor of the viands, the manly beauty of our host's countenance, the striking features of Doc Humes, the droll but lovable appearance of Obe Crews, and the table with its snowy linen and its priceless chinaware, over all of whom and which the lights of the wax candles in the chased silver candelabra fell softly and like a benediction, as it were.

Conversation took a wide range, slavery, ancient history, astronomy, and geology being discussed, along with other things, and as I am a good listener, I think I never enjoyed a night more in my life. Doc Humes and the Squire are men of varied reading,

thoughtful minds and excellent flow of language, and neither is the least bit conceited, so that they are always as ready to listen as to talk. Obe Crews is not their equal in point of education nor as to general information, but he has great natural good sense and he takes such droll and humorous notions of things that he is delightful company. For instance, the Squire was saying that the science of geology has demonstrated that the earth, instead of being only five or six thousand years old, is many times older, probably millions and millions of years; and that the discovery of fossils in ancient geological strata proved that animals have heretofore existed many of which are very dissimilar to any existng at that time, which goes to show, said he, that the biblical account of creation, if taken literally, must be incorrect. Doc Humes agreed with him and said that Lamarck's idea that living things in remote geologic times were much more simple in organization than now and that life has progressed in vast series and with increasing complexity, many forms disappearing entirely, was in his judgment, a correct one.

"Gentlemen," said Obe, "you're heap smarter than I am. I know nothing about rocks except that I had more than my share of 'em on the little farm I traded to Mrs. Finnegan, where they took up so much room a plow row across the field was crookeder than John Happy's backbone; but lemme tell you, I think five or six thousand years is a middlin' fair stretch of time and that lots of things could have happened that the fellows who wrote books and the fellows who go around diggin' holes in the ground don't know a d——n thing more about than I do. Millions of

years! D'you suppose that because some old galoot has a pair of spectacles on his nose he can look at a rock and tell me how old it is? Couldn't God make rocks without puttin' figures on 'em to show what time of day it was? And when men go to smellin' and sniffin' around and chippin' off little pieces of stone to prove that the Bible is a lie I wonder the Almighty don't smite 'em hip and thigh. My old mother used to read the Sacred Word to me when I was a boy and I remember that somewhere between Genesis and Revelations it says that God's ways are foolishness to the wise, which is just a sly way of saying the ways of the wise are foolishness to God."

Then again, when we were on the subject of Astronomy Obe said: "You say the sun is millions of miles away and that compared with the planets and the stars this earth ain't bigger than a little grey duck of a marble a boy carries in his pocket. Now the Bible says that God created the earth and all the animals and trees and that then he made the sun to give us light by day and the moon to give us light by night, and I disremember what it says about the stars. Now don't tell me that the sun is millions of miles away; there's no necessity for flinging a light that far,—'twould just be a waste of power; and don't tell me that the earth is a mere fly-speck in the universe. If it was 'twouldn't make any difference whether he let it stand or scraped it out with his thumb-nail. If it don't amount to anything what did he take six days for to make it and all the things in it? Fiddle-sticks! Dominie, brew a bowl of punch, I'm getting dry."

"I'm a poor hand to argue," I said, "and, gentlemen, you know it's not often I attempt it, but on a

matter which concerns all of us as much as this does and which involves the veracity of Holy Writ, I want to say this: The Bible says that in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth. The heavens and the earth were made, or at least, came into existence in some way. The wise men say that an unspeakable time ago nebulous matter filled the universe and that this matter naturally revolved and gravitated about and towards central points, whereby great heat was produced and spherical bodies—hence our planetary and the stellar worlds; that as to this earth, a cooling process which is common to every such body, brought it to a state at which what is called life became possible, and that from the primary forms of life all that we now see of plants and animals have been evolved. Very well,—now go back to that nebulous matter, where did it come from? Did it always exist? If yes, did the revolution and the gravitation set in, as it were, of themselves, and if they did, why was it? And as respects this earth, when it had cooled off enough to permit life, did life come of itself; if yes, how? Gentlemen, the existence of the universe and the existence of life necessitates a cause. The Bible begins with God and says that in the beginning *He* made all things. The wise man begins with nebulous matter and the hypothesis is that all that we see today, including man with his brain, his capacity to think, to reason, to love and to aspire, was once nothing more than stardust ——”

“Just floatin’ around loose so,” broke in Obe Crews, “like Lowry’s buttermilk in the cupboard.”

“Take your choice,” I continued. “I choose the biblical account which gives one a definite God. Your

nebulous matter is nothing more, I take it, than the Chaos referred to in Genesis. This potter's clay, so to speak, was taken in hand by the Great Artificer. From it he made in the beginning, the heavens and the earth and all that therein is, and what we call life is the breath of his nostrils. This satisfies my mind; I rest here."

"Very well, Dominie," said the Squire, "we will rest with you. Whatever may be the truth about these high matters, one thing is certain; if God made you he endowed you with a marvelous capacity to make good punch. Nelson, fill the gentlemen's glasses."

BLACK-HAWK

Black-hawk (his real name was John Tanner, but this was not generally known; everybody called him Black-hawk, and I opine he acquired this name because of his peculiar appearance, although there was a sort of tradition that he had been in the Black-hawk war when he was a young man)—Black-hawk was not a fellow townsman of mine, seeing that he lived some seven or eight miles out on Stoner, but I knew him quite well; and, as he hauled wood to town and sold it for a living, driving in nearly every day in the week, and as he was a droll creature whose disposition, habits and ways interested me I find pleasure in embalming him, so to speak, in these Chronicles. He

was a long, lean, lank-bodied man with coal-black hair, dark complexion and a hook-billed head that reminded one of a bird of prey—say an eagle or a hawk, and this likeness was so striking that whenever I saw him I looked, involuntarily, at his hands expecting to see regular claws that clutch and pierce. At the time I have in mind, which was in the early Fifties, Black-hawk was well on to seventy years of age, but notwithstanding this and in spite, as I may say, of his intemperate habits he was a man of wonderful vitality and strength. He never came to town but what he got full of liquor; and as to his strength he has been known to lift a full barrel of whiskey to his mouth and deliberately drink from the bung-hole. There are men who, like old *Silenus*, get drunk every day. Every day they wage war, so to speak, against John Barleycorn, and invariably get beaten; but notwithstanding, they resolutely return to the fray the next morning, apparently unharmed. Whiskey seems to be food as well as drink to them. Black-hawk was that sort of man. And it didn't matter how far gone he was in his cups—how all but helpless he was when drunk—it was marvelous to see that in great measure he kept his senses, and the fool things he would say or do at such times seemed to be actuated more from devilment and humor than from any inclination to do harm.

To illustrate: The muster of the Corn-stalk militia was held one fall in a big pasture out on the country road which leads from Oldfields to Stoner and which Black-hawk took coming from his little farm to town and returning. He had brought in a load of wood that day, as usual, and after selling it,

had proceeded to get drunk. Ordinarily he would start home along towards the shank of the evening, but happening to remember that it was muster day he concluded he would go out a little earlier than usual and see something of the muster.

Now, as fate would have it, just as he reached the top of the hill from which the view of the muster field opened out before him, a sham battle was waging fiercely and the infantry were charging a little knoll that was heroically defended by the artillery, viz: the brass cannon our army had captured from the Greasers in the memorable war with Mexico. Off to one side astride their war steeds were General Themistocles Trumper and his staff watching the charge, the General with his large field glasses to his eyes after the manner of Napoleon at Austerlitz, and giving orders which sent his staff officers dashing across the pasture.

Black-hawk, mounted on his leader, stopped his team on the crest of the hill and looked on. The small field piece was thundering from the knoll as rapidly as the two artillerymen could load it; the infantry were charging in solid ranks and shouting as they went, and just then Black-hawk concluded that the artillery was over-matched and in great need of an auxiliary. The moment this thought came into his head he clucked up his team, whirled his wagon whip and with an Indian war-whoop rushed down the hill, dashed through the open gateway at great risk to his wagon, and charged the wonder-stricken infantry in the rear. Nothing could check his headlong course. The soldiers casting aside their corn-stalk guns fled in every direction. General Trumper, uttering a fearful

oath, galloped at full speed, his staff at his heels, to intercept Black-hawk.

"What in h——l are you doing here?" he shouted as he came up alongside the wagon. Black-hawk made no answer and paid not the least attention to the old hero. On he rushed, lashing his horses into a frenzy, and making a wide circuit he went whirling through the gate-way again and down the big road in the direction of his farm. Obe Crews, Chief of Staff with the rank of Major, put after Black-hawk as if to capture him and bring him a prisoner of war, back to the pasture. But in truth Obe was bursting with laughter and only wanted to get away himself, so that he might indulge his inclination without offence to his superior officer. He said, in telling us about it that night, that Black-hawk's charge, the scattering infantry, and the furious General galloping across the pasture, the tail of his rawboned roan sticking out like a charred pole or a section of hose-pipe, were too much for him and that he put a half a mile between himself and General Trumper before he dared to rein in Blue John.

One day Black-hawk was trudging alone homeward from town, drunk as usual, when he was hailed by a neighbor of his who had fallen from his horse and was too far gone in liquor to get up again.

"I say, Black-hawk," he called out, "I'll give you two bits if you will help me on my horse."

"Can't do it for that money," replied Black-hawk, "I just paid a fellow half a dollar to put me on mine."

On the last day Black-hawk was ever in Oldfields he went home in his usual condition. His wife was a poor timid soul afraid of him as death, and he amused himself when drunk by abusing her and threatening

to kill her. It is not believed that he ever really intended to hurt her but he frightened her prodigiously, and she would run into the woods or escape up stairs where she would remain until he had gone to bed. On this day he got after her and she ran up stairs closely pursued by her lord. At the top of the stairs a window was open and Black-hawk thought, as was supposed, that he saw his wife leap through the window. "By G—d, Susan!" he exclaimed, "if you can fly, old Black-hawk can fly too," and through the window he jumped headforemost.

His wife peeped out from her hiding place and saw him piled up in a heap on the ground below, silent and motionless. Hurrying down stairs and running to him she found him dead as a door-nail. He had fallen on his head and broken his neck.

In talking of the fate of Black-hawk at Obe Crews' tavern shortly after his death Obe observed that anybody could fly, but lighting was difficult. "It's this way," said he, "the soft air between the window and the ground does no harm, but when you butt up again the globe which is a rollin' on its way at a tremendous rate, you've either got to stop it or it'll stop you. Blackhawk made a miscalculation—his neck bone was not equal to the occasion."

Obe's droll remark put me in a brown study. How often do we see men whose neck-bones are not equal to the occasion! There was Napoleon when he invaded Russia, and the British when they ran up against Old Hickory at New Orleans. Then there's the wise man who pitches into the Bible. And of all the miscalculations that were ever made there's the man who thinks he knows womankind.

THE GREAT RACE BETWEEN BILL BASSETT AND RANDOLPH
JONES

The year after the memorable contest between Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson, Bill Bassett and Randolph Jones ran for the legislature. Bill is a Whig and Randolph is a Democrat. The hot fires of the presidential election had simmered down but still retained live coals in abundance, and the campaign waxed warm.

The candidates stumped the county, making speeches in every precinct. A big barbecue took place on the 4th of July in Doc Humes' woods pasture. Hand-bills on gate posts and barn-doors throughout the county giving notice of public speaking arrested the attention of the passers-by; and by the time the race was fairly on every man, woman and child had taken sides, many of the men passionately advocating the election of the candidate they preferred, and neglecting their business to talk politics. The barbecue was the great event of the campaign. It was held, as I have mentioned, in a woods pasture of Doc Humes', near town. The day was an ideal summer day; not one of those days when the sky has no clouds and the sun beats down on you with a fierce heat; but one when between a lot of clouds of fantastic shapes patches of deep blue could be seen. To make a droll description, it was like looking through a sort of woolly lattice-work far away into immeasurable space where God lives. A gentle wind rustled the foliage of the sugar trees and the black walnuts, making a

soft murmur up among the leaves as if they were whispering to one another. How beautiful the world is on such a day! How its loveliness and its serenity permeates my soul and makes me glad to be alive!

Under Obe Crews' supervision, for Obe is a master hand at a barbecue, a long trench was dug, the full length of which was now a bed of live coals, and across this trench poles were placed at intervals, some to support great iron kettles and others the divers kinds of meats to be roasted—muttons and shoats and beeves. In the kettles, green corn, tomatoes, potatoes, red peppers, chickens and squirrels bobbed up and down in the bubbling water, intermingling their rich juices, the hot vapors filling the air, and sending off a sweet savor that made my mouth water. This was the burgoo, the most delicious soup in the world. Talk about your French soups, la!

A dozen negroes, hatless, bare-armed and grinning from ear to ear, turned and basted the roasts, and stirred the burgoo. Negro women under the directions of my old Dinah, spread cotton cloths on the rude tables, and distributed along the whole length of them loaves of bread, cakes, pies, pickles, and jellies. In addition to all this generous spread of eatables, there was a great hogshead of whiskey toddy, with numberless bright, new tin cups which did double duty as goblets for the liquor and as soup plates for the burgoo.

I was on the ground early for I dearly love, on such occasions, to be among the first so that I can see and hear all that's said and done from start to finish; the busy stir of preparing everything, the people flocking in from every direction and by every means,

afoot, horseback, in wagons, buggies, carriages; the old folks with the little children; the young men and the rosy-cheeked damsels, all in their Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes, ribbons and furbelows, and gayly colored parasols, smiling, laughing, chatting; here and there an old maid, primp and demure; bachelors of matured age, whose sweethearts were now the mothers of children who called them "Uncle," and negroes of every age and sex, the whites of their eyes and their white teeth contrasting with the dusky browns or sable blacks of their skins. Then the fife and drum corps, playing like mad, the old fifer, McDonald, blowing his very soul away through the instrument, which he says is the only one in the world that can make real music; a six-foot negro beating the big drum, and Sim Drake rattling away on the little drum at such a rate you could hardly see his drum-sticks.

The crowd was prodigious. And the noise! The talking, the hallooing, the quips and the quirks, the neighing of the horses, and over all the rustling leaves of the trees, the summer clouds and the glimpses of blue sky far away.

First the burgoo and the various roasts and eatables, with liberal potations from the hogshhead of toddy, and then came the speeches. And this brings me naturally to the two candidates, the orators of the day, Bill Bassett and Randolph Jones. I must essay a pen picture, so to speak, of these.

Randolph is a man somewhere in the forties, a handsome, well-dressed fellow always, brown-haired, blue-eyed, and a thorough aristocrat from top to toe. On his two thousand acres of blue grass land he lives like a lord. His house, his fine cattle, his Grey Eagle

race horses, his fox hounds and pointer dogs, his everything that abundant wealth can supply, his college education in this country, and abroad,—nothing is lacking, one would say, to make him the very darling of fortune. Nothing except the good will of his fellow men. Randolph is not a popular man and he never tried to be. Why he came out as a candidate for the legislature is more than I know, unless, having everything else heart could wish, he concluded he would have a seat in the Capitol of the State, also and make laws for the rest of us. He prides himself on his blue blood, being closely connected on both sides with the best families in the State, and his father before him having been a man of some distinction. 'Pon my word, I think he is the most stuck-up man I ever saw in my life. I never hear his name mentioned that I do not recall some lines of poetry I stumbled on in one of Disraeli's books,—Disraeli, Senior:—

“He was so proud, if he should meet
The twelve Apostles in the street
He'd turn his nose up at them all,
And Christ himself must take the wall.”

Randolph is a man of fine manners in fine company, and of no manners at all with those he considers his social inferiors. He nods in a patronizing way when he meets Squire Buckley or Doc Humes—I hear that he says the Squire “is nothing but a quill-driver” and that Doc is an “old mid-wife.” He gives me a sort of a peck of his head when he looks my way, and as to poor old Obe, “he looks clean through me and beyond,” says Obe, “as if my belly was a window pane.”

To think of such a man attempting to be elected to the legislature, or to anything else, for that matter, in this country! He ought to be a lord and live in England, where, as I hear (and believe), the bulk of the people take off their hats and stand bareheaded in the big road when a man of rank passes by, and they would rather lick his shoes than go to a horse race.

I hear that his mother, a sensible woman, told him he was a fool to go into politics, and that if he didn't change his ways and let out his pride several buckle holes he wouldn't get a vote in the county. The result showed—but I'll not anticipate.

Bill Bassett is as much unlike Randolph in every particular as it is possible for one man to differ from another. Both belong to the human race, both are white and both are of the male gender, but that's as far as the similarity goes. Bill was born and raised on a little farm up near the head waters of Lulbegrud, where the people are so poor they go hunting in the morning before they can have breakfast, and so lean and angular "their bones make eye-holes in their skin." But Bill was an exception to the general worthlessness and shiftlessness of his neighbors. He was energetic and smart, and before he had reached middle age he got out of that country and managed to lay up enough money to buy a fine piece of land out on Stoner. That was ten years ago, and now he was, as the Yankees say, one of the forehandedest men in the county. Very thrifty, Bill is, in spite of his passion for politics. My observation tells me that, taking the matter by and large, a man can't mix politics with honest work. No matter what the work is, farming, merchandising, doctoring, even practising law, if

that comes under the head of honest work, you must attend to it and let politics alone, or you must attend to the politics and let your work go by the board, in which case, nine times out of ten, you'll eat your heart out and die in the poorhouse. But, as I say, Bill Bassett is an exception. He goes around through the county buying up calves, and he never gives more than they are worth, and at the same time he tells jokes to the "boys," flatters the women and kisses the babies. There isn't a more popular man in all the county. A hearty, frank, straightforward fellow, honest as the days are long, with a sharp eye to business, and fonder of talking politics than any man I ever saw in my life.

He is a large man with a jolly face, and he always dresses in common blue jeans clothes.

To get back now, to the barbecue, and to the speaking: 'Twas agreed that the candidates should have an hour each, and Randolph and Bill threw up "wet or dry" to decide who should have the closing speech. Bill won. And so Randolph took the stand—a rude platform constructed for the occasion—and opened up. The burning issue in our county that year was whether Four Mile Creek should be declared by law to be a navigable stream. Some of the farmers on Four Mile were in favor of the bill and some were against it. Those for it had timber on their lands which they could sell in case boats were permitted to pass up and down the creek, or if they could put a boom at the mouth of the creek and collect their logs there ready when there was a rise, to be floated down the Kentucky River. Those opposed to the bill had no timber to speak of on their lands, they contended that

such use of the stream would injure them, and that so long as it remained a non-navigable creek their lines ran to the middle of it, or clean across it if they owned both banks, and they could protect their property by law.

Well, it was a matter that concerned, in reality, only the Four-milers—not more than a dozen men in all—but that was enough for an “issue.” There must be *something* to differ about or what would be the use of having politics at all, and to have no politics . . .

Surely in Kentucky you might as well say we’ll have no religion.

Randolph was in favor of enacting a law making Four Mile a navigable stream. Bill Bassett was against it. The former led off with a speech that didn’t touch the issue with a ten-foot pole, as the saying is. Instead of arguing the right of the thing, the fact that it would not injure anybody, but, on the contrary would benefit every land holder on the creek and more or less directly, every citizen of the county, which I opine was the fact, he told the people how old his family was, what a great man his father had been, and that the soil of Kentucky was honored as the resting place of the bones of his ancestors. He pictured Washington at Valley Forge and General Jackson at New Orleans and continued to tell us that his great-grandmother was a cousin of the Father of his Country, and that an uncle had married a relation of Old Hickory. ’Pon my word, I never saw a man make such an ass of himself in my life!

When Randolph had finished his speech Sim Drake threw his hat up into the air and shouted “Hurra for Jones!” But Sim, by this time, was so full of liquor

he didn't know whether he was a Whig or a Democrat, and didn't care, and would have hurrahed for one man or one sentiment just as readily as for another. There were shouts from a few old hide-bound Democrats but they didn't hold out long.

Then came Bill Bassett, pushing his way through the crowd amidst a perfect storm of hurras, and ascended the platform.

I wish I could give Bill's speech verbatim et literatim and ipso factum, as Greenbury Crupples would say. First, with a solemn face, he told the crowd how it would just about ruin a lot of people on Four Mile if the creek was declared to be a navigable stream; that it was a mean, selfish project on the part of certain persons who proposed to put money into their pockets at the expense of their neighbors; that when he was a boy a law was passed making Lulbegrud a navigable stream and what was the result? Why, fellow citizens, it started a feud in them parts which still raged and had cost the lives of forty men; that even when black suckers were running on the riffles a man couldn't go spearing for them, except at the risk of his life; that to run boats up a small stream like Four Mile would shove the water out of its banks and flood the adjacent lands, besides scaring all the fish away, and the boom that would be built at the mouth of the creek would prevent them from coming back; that if the law was passed a number of his constituents out there intended to abandon their farms and move to Missouri. Then he pitched into Randolph Jones' speech, and 'pon my word, I never heard a speech so belittled and ridiculed in my life. "Four fathers!" said Bill, "Mr. Jones tells us he has four

fathers. Why, fellow citizens, wouldn't you say one was enough, and to spare? Mr. Jones is a Democrat and voted for James K. Polk against Henry Clay, the greatest man that ever trod dirt. Where was Polk when Henry Clay was thundering in the Senate of the United States with such power and eloquence as to astonish the world? I'll tell you where he was: He was running errands for his master, Andrew Jackson, down yonder in Tennessee, or combing burrs out of the tail of Jackson's horse. Mr. Jones thinks he is better than the ordinary run of mankind. He thinks that when you and me are humbly seated in a little bunch up in heaven a-playin' on our jews-harps, he will be a sittin' alongside of God tellin' him about his four fathers and his ancestors' bones."

There was no end to such droll nonsense. The crowd was with Bill, and applauded and laughed at everything he said. And I may add right here, that when the election came off Bill was elected by a large majority. Every Whig voted for him, of course, while the Democrats gave Randolph such feeble support he swore in his wrath that he would never again give the county a chance to send him to Frankfort.

Of course from the early morning all through the day the hogshead of whiskey toddy was paid devoted attention, the liquor receding, so to speak, all the time, and along towards the shank of the evening getting so low that only a long-legged and long-armed man could reach it with his cup. Sim Drake, between waking and sleeping, had been drunk and partly sober several times; hundreds of men lay around on the grass too full to get up but still able to shout, "Hurra for Bill Bassett." The big drum was hopelessly

floored, and old McDonald's fife, while he sat propped up against a sugar tree, asleep, had been stuffed with grass, and let him blow ever so hard when he awoke, he couldn't produce a note. A number of fist-fights took place on the grounds, the Sheriff slipping away not caring to make any arrests. Constable Scraggs, under the eye of his stern superior, Greenbury Crupples, indiscreetly attempted to stop a fight between two of the Four Mile boys, whereupon they ceased to pummel each other and turned on the Constable and put him to flight. Sim Drake lost his balance trying to dip up another cup of toddy, from the hog'shead, and fell in, and when I left for town McDonald was on the platform swearing he could whip the man who put grass in his fife.

DRAKE AND DICKERSON—TAILORS

Simeon Drake and Cyrus Dickerson are tailors by trade and occupation, and they are partners in that humble but useful business.

The reader of these Chronicles will remember Sim who has heretofore been mentioned, but I must now embalm him as a member of the firm of Drake and Dickerson, and with him his partner, Cy Dickerson. Of course there are tailors in all countries where men wear breeches and wear holes in 'em, and it is possible though not probable that here and there outside of Oldfields a tailor may be found who is as queer as

either Sim or Cy; but I opine it is not possible that two such characters can be met up with sitting cross-legged side by side on the same tailors' bench plying their needles industriously the while with ever greater industry they ply their tongues,—on local gossip, on politics, on religion, on the arts and the sciences, with not infrequent dips, so to speak, into poetry, and into the deep things of philosophy.

Before they formed a partnership they had adjoining shops on Main Street, but the brick wall between them prevented conversation and that constant intercommunication their very souls longed for. So situated, and so desiring, so near and yet so far, both of them grew unhappy and positively drooped. Doc Humes, who had patronized first one and then the other, observing how matters stood, suggested to them that they become partners; and he owning the two little buildings, proposed to remove the dividing wall and throw them into one shop.

Sim and Cy talked the thing over and finally agreed to it, provided articles of partnership could be framed to the satisfaction of both parties, and they repaired to Tom Tuttle's office to obtain his professional services thereanent. The sole trouble was this: Both of them had a sweet tooth, as the saying is, for whiskey, and were liable to get drunk any day. This was nobody's business so long as each was working for himself, but if they formed a partnership some just and equitable arrangement should be made on this head. Tom was equal to the occasion and drew up the articles, the preamble to which was as follows:

"In the name of God, Amen. The undersigned,

Simeon Drake and Cyrus Dickerson, by trade, occupation and nature, tailors, designing, intending and purposing to enter into partnership, do hereby agree."

Then follow the usual articles of partnership, of which the third and fourth were as follows:

"3rd. That they shall make all they can and divide the net proceeds between them, every 24th day of December.

"4th. That whenever one of them is gone in liquor the other shall remain sober; provided, that neither shall get drunk twice in succession, but shall in this respect particularly give his partner a fair showing, and provided that article number four shall always stand suspended on holy days and on election days."

These two men are very like and very unlike. Both are small, both have red noses, and both are interesting talkers, but Sim's flow of ideas may be compared to a branch that makes much noise as its shallow waters ripple rapidly over its pebbly bottom, while Cy's are like a creek that has deep holes here and there in its course. In plain words Sim is your ordinary tailor, ignorant, gullible, garrulous, and conceited. Cy is a remarkable man in some respects, being gifted by nature with a vigorous mind capable of originality both in conception and in expression; but sharing with his brother of the goose iron that weakness for gossiping and chatter which is so noticeable in tailors and barbers. I sometimes wonder why these two humble avocations engender such talkers. In the barbers' case where work is on the faces and the heads of their customers it is possible that by some occult law their fingers in running about the

brain-pan of others, receive and transmit to their own a lot of ideas, which, mixed and confused on the way set their tongues a wagging. But tailors make or patch clothes for the body and in stitching a coat for the back, a waist-coat for the belly, or breeches for the posterior parts, it is hardly in the range of possibilities to gather inspiration. A savage will drink the blood of the warrior he has slain in battle, or will eat his heart, and thereby, as he believes, increase his own prowess by so much as his vanquished foe possessed that quality, but this fancy has a certain degree of probability or reason in it. At least we seem to understand how he thinks about it. But it would be very droll to suppose that by sewing a patch on the seat of Henry Clay's breeches one could acquire some of the greatness of that great man. No, I can't account for it and I give it up.

Sim and Cy are in good standing with the male portion of Oldfields people, speaking by and large, for they do honest work, charge reasonable prices and are peaceable, quiet souls, even when in liquor; but the women do not like them, and little Miss Tripper in particular is a most relentless enemy of the firm. Her hostility came about in this wise: Years ago the little dressmaker set her heart on marrying Sim, and she was so nice and sweet to him that the first thing we knew he had proposed and had been accepted. The day for the wedding had been fixed and Miss Tripper was busy making up her trousseau, while Sim had actually selected the very piece of cloth from which he was to measure off enough for his nuptial suit. But at this stage of the matter Cy interfered and succeeded in breaking off the match. I happened into

their shop one day and heard the following conversation between them, which, being a friend, my presence did not interrupt:

"Sim," said Cy. "Halt before it's too late. If you don't, mark my word, you'll repent it to the last day of your life. You are fifty years old if you're a day——"

"Fifty-two last July," interrupted Sim.

"And Miss Tripper can't be younger ——"

"Says she's thirty," said Sim.

"Thirty the mischief!" continued Cy. "I've known her all her life and to my certain knowledge she's been dressmaking for thirty years at least. She's a little dried-up, high-tempered old maid who'll make your life miserable. You won't be married a month before you'll wish you were dead."

"See here, Cy," said Sim. "'Spose all you say is true; I'm engaged to her and how the devil am I to get out of it? I'm hooked."

"Only through the jaw, Sim," said Cy, "—only through the jaw. Wherefore you can break away. As long as a bass hasn't swallowed the hook his chances are good. A big jump into the air and a shake of the head and he's free again. Why, man, what were you thinking about to go and be engaged to marry? You must have been hoodooed. D'ye think you were cut out for a family man? And 'spose some fine day you should go home overpowered by liquor—what'd happen? As a single man, as a free man, you can tumble into bed and sleep it off, peacefully and quietly and the only after claps would be a headache in the morning. But with the little Tripper there as your wife to receive you ——"

"Say no more, Cy!" interrupted Sim. "The jig's up. I'll break off the match this very day." And he did. In the suit that Miss Tripper brought for damages, the following letter that Sim wrote her came out in the evidence, and also that Tom Tuttle had dictated it:

Miss Tabitha Tripper,
Respected Miss,

When in the course of human events it became necessary for a people to assert their freedom, or for an individual to do likewise, and to throw off the bonds that bind 'em, it is due to the respect we have for public opinion, and in this instance to the sincere regard and esteem the undersigned entertains for you—mind you, I say regard and esteem, not love—to set out the causes and reasons which actuate (me) in the premises. Heretofore, Miss, on a certain occasion, to-wit, the 4th of July last, at a time when as was well known to you, the undersigned was far gone in liquor, you took an unfair advantage of his condition and entrapped him into a marriage agreement.

I am advised by my lawyer that that agreement is not binding in law, and I hereby notify you that I repudiate and disaffirm it, and hold it for naught.

I also notify you that I have fits and am in no physical condition to enter into the holy bonds of matrimony.

With sentiments of profound respect,
I beg to subscribe myself your most Ob'd't serv't.

SIMEON DRAKE.

Judge Summers instructed the jury that the defendant's drunkenness was no defense; that if the

plaintiff was ready and willing and able to perform her part of the contract notwithstanding the defendant may have been drunk when he promised, she was entitled to a verdict; and that as to the defendant's fits, if the plaintiff could stand them it mattered not. The evidence showed that Miss Tripper had expended \$50.00 on her trousseau, and the jury gave her a verdict for that amount. The plea of set off that Tom Tuttle endeavored to sustain on the ground that it was worth more than \$50.00 to the plaintiff to escape from the engagement was thrown out by the court with admonitory remarks to counsel; but Obe Crews, who was on the jury, said if the matter had been permitted to reach them they would have allowed it and have found for the defendant. As to damages for injury to Miss Tripper's feelings, Obe said he took his stand the moment the jury got to the jury room and told his fellow jurors he would stay there for nine solid months before he would agree to give her a cent, and wouldn't do it then.

"I'm hostile to breach of promise suits on principle," said Obe. "If a man wins a woman's love and promises to marry her he ought to do it, speaking generally, but if he backs out I'm not in favor of encouraging the sex to rush into court to get a money plaster for their sores. There's something indecent about it, and a modest nice woman won't do it. Leave the fellow to the contempt of the community. If a man under promise of marriage ruins a girl—mind you, I say a *girl*, he ought to have the top of his head blown off with a double-barrelled shot-gun loaded with buck-shot. The law don't give such relief but it ought to. Miss Tripper isn't a girl by forty years;

she wasn't ruined; and as to affection she wasn't phased.

TOM TUTTLE: LAWYER

In the embalming process, so to speak, in which I am engaged, in writing these Chronicles of Oldfields, I have already preserved Tom Tuttle in part, having, as it were, fixed a few arms and legs in the amber, but the Chronicles will be incomplete unless I imbed the whole creature for surely a droller dog never lived.

Tom is one of those rare birds who never migrate and whose song is heard throughout the year. By this I mean that Oldfields is his native place, that like old Sam Johnson, with respect to London, he thinks there is no other town in the world worth living in, and that this life of ours here on earth is altogether jolly and desirable. In all of which I agree with him most cordially. There are some people who are born, not red in the face as a Christian baby should be, but blue as indigo, and they go through life that way. They are always grunting and complaining about one thing or another; nothing that is, is right; they could have given God several pointers at the creation, if there had been a God, but there wasn't and isn't; blind chance prevails in the universe and we are all a set of miserable creatures who had much better have never been born. They are Pessimists, with a capital P, and find a sort of delectable misery in it, which they nurse to keep it warm, as Burns would say.

Tom Tuttle is as far removed from that kind of man as the Earth is from the Star Aldebaran. No comet in the heavens foretold at his birth war, pestilence, and famine. Unlike Caesar he was not born with teeth in his mouth, nor was he at the age of five the prodigious infant that Prince Gargantua was, whose veritable history is so faithfully portrayed for us by old Rabelais. But beyond all peradventure Tom was a remarkable fellow, long before he was weaned, which, however, was not until he had reached his fifth year, for in that year, so the story goes, he pounded his mother in the back when riding behind that worthy woman on the way to Church, because she would not halt her horse under the shade of a road-side tree and give him suck. As he grew and waxed strong the devil of Mischief took possession of him more and more, and he was never so happy as when he was playing some prank or other on those about him. At home, at school, on the street, in church,—anywhere and everywhere, people and things,—faces, gait, manners, and customs, prevalent opinions, established laws, anything and everything constituted subjects for his raillery and his jokes; and such he is today as a man,—a jesting, laughing, rollicking creature, the like of which I never saw in my life. And one of the drollest things is that his features in repose are the equal in solemnity to Judge Summers. To look at him then you would say 'twas not possible that he had ever cracked a smile in his life, and that if he should attempt to the smile would crack him. Strangers wonder what doleful misfortune has happened to him, but no one who knows can look into his face without laughing. Early in his

young manhood he determined to adopt the profession of the law, because as he says, the sights and scenes in the court room, the stiff old judge on the bench, the tricky cunning of the lawyers, the expressions on the faces of the jury, the curious characters often seen in the witness box, are perpetual sources of amusement, and the vocation affords daily opportunity to see the absurd side of his fellow men.

He tells me in confidence that the nourishment he has derived from looking at Judge Summers has lengthened his days by ten years, at least; that Greenbury Crupples is one of his valuable assets; that Cavendish Smith, the "Nestor of the Bar," is a perpetual delight, and that the average jury is something more than a demonstration that man's primitive ancestor was a baboon. So I say, Tom jokes and jests about everything and everybody, himself included.

One day he invited Squire Buckley into his office to look at his law library. Here's a partial list of his books, and the order in which they are arranged on the shelves:

Coke on Lyttleton; Dr. Gunn's Family Medicine; Burrough's Reports—a broken set; Rabelais' works; Bacon's Abridgment; Josephus; Chitty's Pleading; Tom Jones; Story on the Constitution; Humphrey Clinker; Clark's Commentaries; The Arabian Nights; Blackstone; Chambers' Encyclopedia, first and third volumes; a dissertation on the Abaque Hoc—in Mss. by T. Tuttle, Esq.; Gil Blas, the Leviathian; Coke's Institutes—a broken set; the Prairie Flower; Homer's Ilaid—Chapman's Translation, etc., etc.

"What d'ye think of it?" he asked the Squire.

"A very remarkable collection of law books," the Squire replied.

"Yes," said Tom, "it takes the three V's to describe it—Valuable, Varied, and Voluptuous. In short, it's rich. When I get sick of Coke or Chitty I consult Doctor Gunn. When the absurdities and the untruths of the law make me tired I turn to the Arabian Nights. When Blackstone bores me black in the face I take up Noble's Leviathan to cheer me on my way, and when I get dry in the mouth reading Story, I open Homer and memorize his ship list—Rabelais and Tom Jones I save for Sundays."

Tom tells this story on himself: "I got my first case, after coming to the bar, by appointment. Boone Diver was indicted for selling whiskey to niggers, and, not having employed a lawyer to defend, Judge Summers appointed me. Boone wanted to plead guilty, as he knew the Commonwealth had a sure thing against him, but I persuaded him and we went to trial. The verdict of the jury was that he was guilty of the offense charged and that he should be confined at hard labor in the penitentiary for the period of one year. I moved for a new trial, Boone protesting, and Judge Summers either because of my youth or because I was then courting his daughter, granted the motion. The next term of court, six months after, Boone being penned up in jail meanwhile, because no one would go bail for him, we had the second trial and again the verdict was guilty, etc., but this time the jury gave him three years in the pen. The moment the Clerk read out the verdict Boone jumped up from his chair and cried out, 'Thar, Tom Tuttle, you've played hell,' and so I had. He sent me

word from jail by Dave Holdem that so soon as he got out of the penitentiary he would tan my hide, but less than sixty days of honest labor at Frankfort impaired his constitution and he died."

Another story Tom tells on himself concerns his interview with Judge Summers, when he asked the Judge for his daughter, Miss Sally.

"Of course," says Tom, "I made the request in the customary way, that is, I desired his consent that I might pay my addresses, etc., etc.

"I was awfully rattled and my mouth got as dry as a dirt road in August, and I had a d——n perverse desire to swallow. Old Hard Facts looked at me as if I was a horse-thief he was about to pass judgment on.

" 'Mr. Tuttle,' he said—and his voice painfully reminded me of the hymn,

‘Hark from the tomb the doleful sound,’—

"Mr. Tuttle, you have been paying your addresses, as you style them, sir, to my daughter for about two years—ah, let me see, yes, two years the third day of this month, and now you ask my consent as if you were just about to begin. You do not mean, sir, what you say. Your language is not explicit nor conformable to the facts, sir. You have asked my daughter to marry you, sir; and she has consented to do so, and now you want the consent of her father. Are not *these* the facts, sir?"

" 'Yes sir,' I whispered.

" 'I surmised as much, sir, and now it is my purpose to ask you a question, sir,' said he. 'What are your circumstances, sir, and how do you propose to meet the necessary expense and outlay, sir, of house-

keeping, and supporting a family? Answer these interrogations, sir.' ”

The matter was now beginning to look funny, says Tom, and his nervousness evaporated.

“ ‘Well, Judge,’ ” I said, “ ‘I have youth, health, a noble profession, a law office, with the rent paid a month in advance, and I have *in embryo*, one of the finest law libraries in the Commonwealth’—at that time I was the owner of two volumes of Blackstone, which I had bought second-hand, and volume one of Chitty on Pleading, an odd volume.”

“ ‘My daughter can’t be clothed and fed on law books, sir,’ ” said he, “ ‘even if they were in *esse*. As to your embryos, I presume, sir, they would materialize all too soon—but I have in mind, sir, that I married Mrs. Summers *nee* Keats, at a time when my estate was limited, sir; and that with industry, prudence, and economy I succeeded in sustaining a family establishment.’ ”

It’s well known to Oldfields that the Judge had nothing when he married and that his wife brought him a nice property.

“ ‘I will take the matter under advisement, sir,’ continued he to Tom, ‘and render my judgment tomorrow morning at ten o’clock A. M.’ ”

Tom says that his defence of a negro boy charged with petit larceny, namely, the taking and carrying away with intent to steal, one box of marbles, one apple, red in color, and two pieces of ginger cake, the property of Fanny Coles, a free woman of color, against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, was the pleasantest professional triumph he ever had.

"Aunt Fanny" testified that a box of marbles, various in kind,—white alleys, grey ducks, alabasters and agates were kept in her little show window and that on a certain day there was also in the window some large red apples, and some freshly baked ginger bread; that she saw the negro standing in front of the window looking in and that just then she had to wait on Jim Tait's boy who wanted a glass of persimmon beer, which took her attention from the negro for a moment; that when she looked again he was gone and so were the marbles, one of the apples, and two squares of gingerbread.

Marcellus Scraggs testified that on complaint made by Aunt Fannie to Greenbury Crupples, J. P., a warrant was issued and he arrested the boy and searched him; that he found some marbles in his right-hand breeches pocket which answered the description in the indictment, but found no apple nor ginger-cake.

One of the court's instructions to the jury was that unless they believed from the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt every material fact necessary to constitute guilt they should find for the prisoner at the bar.

The jury consisted of twelve of the best citizens in the county—matured men, of excellent character and judgment.

The prisoner, a chunk of ebony, barring the whites of his eyes, had been in Dan Holdem's custody since his arrest and as he sat by his lawyer's side he was the picture of misery, for the thought of Dave's cow-hide scared him prodigiously.

In part, Tom's speech to the jury was as follows:

"Gentlemen of the jury," said he, "grey hairs adorn the temples of most of you, and it has been many years since you were boys, but you do not forget the days when you played marbles. You do not forget the proud feeling of ownership you had when your pockets were filled with white alleys and grey ducks, to say nothing of glass-eyes. And if perchance you had them not and flattened your noses against a store window while gazing on them within, you remember distinctly the yearning and the desire to possess them. I ask you to recall such an incident in your lives, when all you had to do was to appeal to your fathers for a nine-pence or a two-bit piece to enable you to buy them. Suppose, instead of being situated so happily you had been a poor little nigger with no daddy, so far as you knew, and that then you stood and looked in at that window. I am now confining myself, Gentlemen, to the subject of marbles; the red apples and the ginger bread I will come to presently.

"Picture to your minds, I say, this boy, standing in front of Aunt Fannie Cole's shop, bare-headed, coatless, no shoes on his feet, no money, his shirt-tail sticking out behind, and that box of bright, new marbles within reach. Put yourself in his place. Consider his race, his slavery, his antecedents, and how, with all of a boy's eagerness to have some marbles, his raising had been such that he could not appreciate nor understand the sinfulness of stealing. What is the essence of wrong doing, gentlemen, if it is not in the knowledge that the particular act is forbidden? Thou shalt not steal, says one of the commandments God wrote with his finger upon the stone

slab, but this little slave boy does not know it. Will you by your verdict bare his poor little naked back to Dan Holdem's cowhide?

"And that red apple and those two pieces of ginger cake; concede for the moment that the evidence convinces you beyond a reasonable doubt that he took them, and to be frank with you gentlemen, I think it squints that way, did you love red apples and ginger cake when you were boys?

"But now mark you; the indictment charges that he took and *carried them away*. Is there any testimony here that he carried them away? Not one scintilla of evidence on this point. Did he carry them away? Would *you* have carried them away? As God is your judge, answer me that question. When you go to the jury room ask each other. The answer is and must be no! You would have downed them on the spot! Very well, such being the case the crime of larceny remains unproven and you must acquit my client."

And they did. With broad smiles on their faces they returned from the jury room with a verdict of "not guilty."

LUDWIG BROWN

A brother lawyer of Tom Tuttle's is Ludwig Brown—a brother lawyer, but of course, a very different sort of a man. I say of course, because no two men are alike, and certainly no two could be more un-

like than Tom and Ludwig. As has been seen, Tom is serious in nothing, except in appearance, but Ludwig is serious in everything, in reality as well as in looks. Doc Humes, who was present when he debouched, so to speak, upon this world, and who has known him all his life, vouches for the story that Ludwig was never known to smile. He was born with a heavy frown on his face, and with the corners of his mouth drawn down as if in protest against his advent, and from that moment to the present time neither the frown nor the corners have lifted; on the contrary both have grown more pronounced, and now it has long been accepted as a fact in Oldfields that he couldn't smile if he tried. A cannon ball may be somewhat rounder than his head, but it couldn't be harder. His hair and beard are clipped short and no wild boar in a German forest has bristles that equal them in stiffness. Obe Crews says he read once in a book that if a lion licked your hand 'twould take the skin off, and that he don't know whether it is true or not, as he never tried it; but he does know that to run your fingers through Ludwig's hair, unless you had on buckskin gloves, would be disastrous. Ludwig's forehead is broad but low, his nose is thick, his chin projects from the continent of his face like a peninsula, and overshadowing his dull grey eyes are beetling brows, all the more noticeable for their shaggy hairs. His height averages well, his shoulders are square, his belly is round, and in walking he plants his feet flatly and solidly on the ground as who should say to this globe "steady there now!"

With such a physical make up his mind and temperament attune as it were, and it was as natural that

he should take to the law—that heaviest and rockiest of sciences—as that the bedstead in his bachelor quarters should be of iron and the seat of his office chairs should be a stranger to a cushion. The leaden ponderosity of the law drew him like a magnet. The ministry is distasteful to him, because, as he says, religion is getting soft and mushy. Calvin and Jonathan Edwards will have to take a back seat. Reverend Spooner is one of the few preachers we see now a days who “uncaps hell” and who holds that as the tree falls so it must lie; and that a baby a foot long, unless it is among the elect, is damned to everlasting torment. . . .

As to medicine, Ludwig will none of it. It is not a science at all,—it is an empirical guess-work thing, a groping around at midnight, in a dark cellar without a candle, a pulse-feeling, tongue-inspecting, bottled-urine-scrutinizing, to try to find out whether a man's liver has turned to leather, or his kidneys are falling to pieces. And when the doctor thinks he has smelt out, that is, *diagnosed* the case he will give the patient a nasty dose that ninety-nine times out of a hundred obstructs and staggers nature, who is doing her best to heal him, and would heal him if let alone. But the law, he says, is a true science, the only trouble being that many men who claim to be lawyers, including some judges on the bench, do not know the law. Mathematics is a true science and the fact is in no way affected because a man like Tom Tuttle, for instance, doesn't know the multiplication table. Just so the organized knowledge we call law is not clouded or rendered uncertain because some lawyers are unlearned. This sounds very well, but 'pon my word, I

think there is a flaw in it somewhere. Two and two are four everywhere and at all times, but a legal proposition, a "pint of law" as Greenbury Crupples would say, may be decided one way in Oldfields and another way somewhere else; or one way here today and another way tomorrow—leastways, if Judge Summers' opinion is unalterable, see how often the lawyers who practice before him differ from him and from one another. And this reminds me: Squire Buckley says it's a sight for Gods and men to witness a tilt of Ludwig Brown with the court. Ludwig, if he says a certain thing is law, and Judge Summers is not disposed to agree with him, can never persuade the Judge that he is wrong. Herein Ludwig is not in worse case than his brothers, but in the case supposed neither can the Judge convince Ludwig that the Court is right. This clash of the two minds and the stern adherence of each man to his own opinions results in scenes in court that are very droll indeed. It takes the Squire, himself a fine lawyer, to tell the following story:

One day, says he, the court had instructed the jury in a murder case, that the law presumed malice from the use of a deadly weapon, and Ludwig, for the prisoner at the bar, contended that malice was never presumed as a matter of law, under any circumstances whatever. He objected to the instruction and tried to show Judge Summers that the court was wrong. He might as well have tried to push the courthouse over with his hands.

"Does not your Honor concede," says Ludwig, "that the presumption of innocence is a legal presumption in the prisoner's favor *ab initio*?"

"I do," said the Judge.

"Does not Your Honor hold that the jury must believe from the evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the prisoner is guilty before they can convict him?"

"I do," said the Judge.

"You have instructed them to that effect," said Ludwig.

"I have," said the Judge.

"Well, sir," said Ludwig, "Your Honor will admit that malice is a material ingredient in constituting the crime of murder."

"Certainly," responded the Judge.

"Very good, sir," said Ludwig, in a triumphant tone of voice. "Now if the court please, there is no escape from the conclusion that malice must be proved, and is not presumed. See the logical force of your admissions: Every material fact must be established by the evidence to the satisfaction of the jury, beyond a reasonable doubt. Malice is a material fact; therefore the law does not presume it, but it must be proven. The indictment alleges it; the *probata* must sustain the *allegata*. Until it does, the presumption of innocence prevails, and no conviction can be had."

"Mr. Brown," said the Judge, sternly, his face showing much anger, "you think you have the court in a corner, but you are mistaken. Malice is a necessary ingredient in the crime of murder; but mark me, sir, malice is a state of the mind and is never susceptible of independent proof like a physical act. If a man stabs another with a bowie-knife, or shoots him with a pistol, the law says that proof of the fact

shows malice. It presumes the existence of malice from the evidence of such a fact."

"If that is the case, Your Honor," says Ludwig, "the presumption is not a presumption of law, but a presumption of fact. The fact of malice is presumed from other facts."

"Tell me, sir," said the Judge, now exasperated beyond measure, "if it is a presumption of fact, as you contend, what makes it such a presumption? Is it not the law, sir, that does? And if it is the law that makes the presumption is not that a legal presumption?"

"But, began Ludwig, unconquered and unconquerable, if ——"

"The objection is overruled, Mr. Brown. You will take your seat sir, the court declines to hear you further."

"Surely, Your Honor," insisted Ludwig.

"Surely as God's in Heaven, sir," roared the Judge, "if you don't sit down this minute the court will commit you for contempt."

That finished it, of course. Ludwig sat half way down, straightened up again, and then with a shake of his head and an audible mutter he took his chair. But for a long time he ceased not to show his anger. He stared at the Judge, and then at the attorney for the Commonwealth, as if he would like to eat 'em, and when his client ventured to whisper something to him he gave a snort that made the man jump with fright.

I have intimated that Ludwig is a bachelor; take him by and large, I opine he is as brave as the average man, but in the presence of a woman he is timid and

awkward beyond measure. Obe Crews says he happened to be in Ludwig's office when little Miss Tripper came to employ him to sue the widow Ripley for damages, the time the widow stalked into the dress-maker's shop and snatching her up threw her across the room. Obe got up to leave, of course, but Ludwig caught him by the arm.

"Don't go, Obe," he said, "I have some important business with you."

"I'll come again," said Obe. "Miss Tripper desires to consult you, I presume."

"I wish to hire you, Mr. Brown," said Miss Tripper, "to bring an action against the widow Ripley."

"I'll drop in again," said Obe, pulling away from Ludwig.

"Stay," said Ludwig. "Miss Tripper, excuse me, Madame, but I have very important business with Mr. Crews, here, which cannot be postponed. I fear I cannot give you any of my time, today, er—nor, to morrow—I have a case set for trial tomorrow. The next, Ma'm, is Sunday. The Monday following I have to ——"

"Ah, I see," said Miss Tripper, with her nose in the air, "you don't want to hire to me at all. I suppose that old termagant Ripley woman is your client. Why didn't you say so at first, sir? I bid you good day, sir. And I'm sure I wish you joy of your widow—he—he—he." With that she clutched her skirts and sailed out of the office, tip-toeing across the floor as if she was stepping over a mud-puddle.

"Thank God she's gone!" ejaculated Ludwig. "I don't want women for clients. And think of bringing

suit for one against another! Miss Tripper and the widow Ripley! Gracious mercy!"

Ludwig is a member of the temperance organization styled The Sons of Temperance, an order, by the way, which I confess I hold somewhat in contempt. If a man can't be decently sober and take a dram of honest liquor without thirsting for a bucket full, the sooner he goes to his reward the better, and all the oaths and pledges, and grips and signs, and ridiculous little aprons and frill-frols in the world won't put backbone and will-power into him. But however this may be, Ludwig belongs to that order, albeit, twice a year, viz; the 4th of July and Christmas day, he gets full and stays full for a month. Then he sobers up and rejoins the order. Here is a droll thing that occurred to him a year or so ago when he was on one of his sprees:

Ludwig's residence is in Water Street, which, it will be remembered, is a street on the far side of Cow Creek, a homely named but pretty little stream running through Oldfields and debouching, so to speak, on to Stoner several miles from town. Ordinarily Cow Creek is shallow, but when the winter rains are exceptionally heavy they swell the stream prodigiously, which necessitates the maintenance of a good stout bridge across it. Now, this bridge being in need of repairs the town Trustees had caused certain planks and heavy timbers to be hauled and thrown upon the ground near by, preparatory to making the necessary repairs, and one of the timbers, a large hewn log, was lying along side the road just before you get to the bridge. It was in Christmas time and Ludwig, very deep in liquor, was on his way home late one dark

rainy night, followed without his knowledge, by Obe Crews, who kept behind him, and whose purpose was to see that he didn't fall into the creek, which was up to high water mark. Obe says that Ludwig stumbled over the log and fell sprawling on it lengthwise, but immediately got to his hands and knees and began to crawl along the log, coon fashion.

"Why the devil," he exclaimed, in the rain and darkness, "don't they put the flooring in this bridge? Do they think a man's knees are padded?"

In that ridiculous position he kept on until he reached the middle of the log, cursing the town Trustees, vowing he'd bring an action for damages, and stopping every little while to rest, for it was laborious and painful work to a man of his weight. Then he lost his grip in someway and rolled off the log,—on to solid ground!

"Well!" he growled, "I wish I may be damned if I didn't think I was crossing the creek."

With great difficulty he regained his feet and continued his way home, startled somewhat at the sound of hearty and loud laughter behind him.

DOMINIE COLLINS

My dear old friend Archie Collins "has gone to his reward," to quote his own quaint way of saying a man has died,—and with a sort of pleasant sadness I purpose to carry out his last wish, which was that I

append to his "Chronicles of Oldfields" a brief biographical sketch of him.

The Dominie, as we loved to call him in his life time, was born here in Oldfields in the "Leafy month of June" 1780, and he was scarcely twenty years of age when he began to teach school. For more than fifty years he followed that useful and honorable avocation here in our little town, which has always been his home. Ordinarily the confinement of a school room and the monotony of a teacher's duties will in time dry up a man's anatomy as well as his nature, and leave him but little more than a lot of bones stretched over with parchment which was once his skin; but it was not so with our Dominie. It was my happy fortune to know him intimately for more than a quarter of a century, and to the very last he was a full-blooded, juicy man and a most genial and lovable one, casting from his broad shoulders the pedagogue's mantle the moment he left the school-room, and becoming in general society and more particularly in the company of his intimates a pleasant, delightful companion.

Being an old bachelor, myself, and therefore having no children to put under his charge, I know nothing more in respect to his qualities as a teacher than what I gathered from common renown, but all of this was to his credit—and there must now be many men and women in Kentucky and elsewhere who have been his pupils and who cherish his memory with fond affection.

Although his "Chronicles" contain but meagre mention of himself, there is enough to show in great measure what manner of man he was. His closest

friends were Doc Humes, Obe Crews and myself, and the world had nothing to offer him as desirable as the company we formed. While he was polite and amiable to everyone, I think we were his only intimate companions, and he was never so happy as when in one or the other of our homes we drank our whiskey toddy—his favorite drink—discussed a good dinner, and smoked a fine cigar, the while the Doc and Obe and I did most of the talking and the Dominie, a beautiful listener, sat and beamed upon us.

If a man crawls into a cave and lives the life of a hermit, I can comprehend how he may nurse any disappointments which association with his fellows produced and how he can say,

“What is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep,
A shade that follows wealth and fame
And leaves the wretch to weep,”—

But surely that association must have been uncongenial and most unfortunate. Where it is otherwise, where men of similar tastes and habits come together the friendship which grows up between them is perhaps the finest relation that can exist between human beings.

I am an old man and the general course of my life has been peaceful and pleasant; but if the affection and the kindly intercourse between Dominie Collins, Doc Humes, Obe Crews and myself were taken out of it, surely there would be a void which nothing in this world could fill.

What pride my old friend took in Oldfields the opening pages of the “Chronicles” make manifest. I

think he loved every house and street and felt that in a way he had a part ownership in them. It is well known that with one single exception he never got so far away that he could not see the courthouse steeple. Once in his boyhood his father took him with him to Lawton, but getting separated in some way he got lost. The fright it gave him made such an impression that he could never again be induced to go further from Oldfields than the country immediately around it; and even then, though knowing that the town was near at hand, he was restless and unhappy if he got into any low place or behind any group of trees from which his view of Oldfields was shut off. To him it was the center of the world, the one habitable spot.

"I nurse this feeling," he said to us one evening, "because I find a certain satisfaction and comfort in it. My interest and my affections are not scattered, as it were, over the face of the earth. I know the sound of every church bell in town and I love to hear them ring. Even the rattling old bell on Kelly's Tavern is pleasant to my ears. The houses are my familiar friends. When I pass them they seem to say 'Good day to you Dominie, we hope you are well to-day.' Of course there are other towns, but they are nothing to me."

In his last—it was his only—sickness, when Doc Humes told him he could not recover, he smiled sadly as he looked into our faces—for we were all with him, and said he was sorry to go.

"I hate to have to go and leave you," he said. "Your friendship and company have been sweet to me beyond expression. What pleasant times we have had together! How rationally, yet gayly as it were,

we have enjoyed life, in this beautiful world that God made. I'm a poor hand to argue, gentlemen, but, indeed, it makes my old heart ache to know that it all must end."

Not a man of us could say a word!

"But," continued he, "there is another life beyond the grave. Obe, you believe there is, and you other two will know it some day.

"I know your lives and your hearts. Permit me to say in this hour that God never made better men, and the assurance I have of that is a great comfort to me now, for surely when your time comes you will meet me up yonder."

Ah, dear me! if there isn't a heaven there ought to be. Surely it seems too hard if there is no immortality for so fine a soul. We buried him under his favorite Elm in the old Presbyterian graveyard, and no Sunday evening goes by, if the weather is not stormy, but what we, his three old friends wend our way thither together, and, resting ourselves on the little bench by the side of his grave, converse in gentle tones about him. His death has not "eclipsed the gaiety of nations" as Sam Johnson said of Garrick, but it has certainly made three old men very sad.

When we hold our little re-unions now, a chair is placed for the Dominie, just as if we expected him to drop in any moment, but we know he never will again. We lift our glasses and bowing to the empty seat, we drink to the memory of our dear old friend.

(Signed)

ISRAEL BUCKLEY.

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